

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REPRINTED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 863.—VOL. XXXIV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 15, 1879.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[FLORAL TREASURES.]

LINKED LOVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

CHAPTER I.

IN THE WELSH VALES.

The actors are at hand, and by their shew
You shall know all that you are like to know.
SHAKESPEARE.

"JUDITH, how will these violets and anemones harmonise?"

"To a marvel, Winefrede. But you are lavishing them with two free a hand."

"Why, have you not another basketfull yonder?"

"No; those are pine cones and spruce apples."

"Oh, and I haven't finished this festoon. That is quite too vexatious."

The interlocutors were two young and handsome women, whose agreeable occupation appeared to be the floral decoration of the great hall of Caerlau Castle. They had hung delicately-woven wreaths and chaplets and bandeaux of the "rathe" primrose, the sweet violet, and the pale spring anemone, mingled with the rarer, but not fairer, blossoms of the petted favourites of the conservatory, on every "coign of vantage" of the grand but sombre old room—from the hammer-beams of the carved oak roof and the silver candle-sconces of the walls;

from the mullions of the great bay windows, and the old ebony étagère which rose tier above tier over the broad mantelsheff and was piled with choicest porcelain; from the burnished corslets and helms that hung on the wainscotted walls, polished as themselves, and from the many old family portraits of dead and gone Glendyrs who looked out with an eternal scowl or simper, as the case might be, from their great gilded frames.

But the prettiest garniture by far of the hall was its two living occupants. On the pictured canvases around were the faces of some of the fairest maids, the stateliest dames of the two proud races of Rhys and Glendyr. Some in the stiff stomacher and immense ruff of the days of Good Queen Bess; some with the hair-fringe on brow and the wanton attire affected at the court of the second Charles, and others in the ungraceful costume of the Georgian era.

But there was no face there so fair, so witching, as was that of the "simple maiden in her flower," whose taper fingers were decking the old pictures—Winefrede Glendyr—sole representative and heiress of two powerful Welsh families.

Winefrede was a tall brunette of nineteen, lissome as a willow wand, yet with all the firm step and proud bearing of her strain. Already the girlish form was rounding to the charming softness of full womanhood. A small, well-formed head set proudly on a supple white neck, and hands and feet, small and delicate, bore testimony to her patrician stock. The exquisite oval of the girl's face, the delicate modelling of nose and lip and chin, were classical rather than Celtic in their perfection.

Perhaps the only token by which Miss Wine-

frede Glendyr could have asserted her claim to belong to the race of the Cymry was her wealth of blue-black hair, which, braided although it now was in a single thick plait, fell down far below the girl's waist. In curious yet piquant contrast to these sable tresses were a pair of eyes of softest, intensest azure.

Miss Judith Vanneck, Miss Glendyr's governess and bosom friend, was a beauty of another pattern, a fair, golden-haired, grey-eyed woman of twenty-three, tall, and of good figure, although perhaps a little too much inclining to plumpness, a trait which she inherited from her Dutch progenitors, for Miss Vanneck's ancestor had fled from Holland to England during the persecution of the Protestants under the bigotted and merciless Alva.

"Now there's nothing left for Sir Lionel Rhys but aucuba and euonymus leaves for a garland," cried Miss Vanneck, as she mounted the short library steps to reach the big oil painting. "There isn't a single blossom for the old gentleman, Winney. Perhaps, however, these will suit him better, for he is an awfully cross-looking old darling."

"Don't be irreverent and sacrilegious, Judith. Sir Lionel was a dear old hero and a true Rhys every inch of him. It is altogether too cruel of you to speak of him so. Give him a wreath of the laurel leaves, for he deserved it. Don't you know he fell beside the dying Wolfe on the glorious Heights of Abraham, when Montcalm's Frenchmen fled before the British bayonets?"

"Well, I ought to know something about that interesting passage of history, my dear Winefrede, when one remembers how often the admiral relates it at length."

"The tale is worth the telling again and

again," cried Miss Glendyr, her face alight with enthusiasm. "There are no such men living now."

"And then she wished
That Heaven had made her such a man."

quoted Miss Vanneck, with an air of mock earnestness.

"You may scoff, Judith, but you know that the race is extinct."

"Flat heresy, Winefrede, to which you will not catch me subscribing. I'm not going to set up the dead and gone generations on a pinnacle above the people amongst whom my own life is cast. There are men as brave and noble, women as fair and good to-day as in any of the buried centuries gone by."

"Now who is the enthusiast?" exclaimed Miss Glendyr, mockingly. "Well, concerning our own sex, you may be right, but I have yet to see the man among the languid, drawing, blasé men who form our society who can compare in all that goes up to make a man with my stout old great-grandfather."

"What no one among the round score of eligible suppliants who haunt Miss Winefrede Glendyr's every step?"

"I should think not," responded the latter young lady, with an air and accent of supreme disdain. "A set of dangles who pester me with their odious attentions because—"

Miss Glendyr paused.

"Because you are the acknowledged belle of North Wales," completed the governess.

"Acknowledged fiddlestick! You can be altogether too ridiculous, ma chère Judith, when you try very much. No, no, 'tis Winefrede Glendyr's dowry, the estates of Caerlan, and the sundry not small sums in Consols standing to the account of Admiral Cynric Rhys, which attracts my pertinacious suitors like foolish flies about a honey crook," as the old poet says."

"Why you are harder to please than even Portia, but as in her case the true squire who shall choose the leaden casket, despising gold and gems, and thereby win the lady, will come at last."

Just then a slow and somewhat heavy footstep sounded on the polished oaken, uncarpeted floor at the far end of the great hall.

"Ah, here comes Owain with some more floral treasures," cried Miss Glendyr, springing lightly from the steps upon which she was standing.

The new comer was a tall, stout man of about fifty, with a countenance whose prominent high cheek bones and other Celtic traits denoted a true son of the Cymry. Welsh indeed to the backbone was Owain Dinas, butler, bard and factotum at Caerlan Castle. He bore several flat wooden garden baskets filled with fragrant yellow jonquils and rich blue spikes of hyacinth.

"You have come in the very happy moment, Owain," cried Winefrede. "We were reduced to evergreens and pine-cones."

"And I do think they are fery pritty," replied Owain, calmly. "And inteed I did not think there was any more at all. Oh, no, inteed."

"Well, what do you think of the effect, Owain?" queried Miss Vanneck, steadying herself upon her wooden perch and casting a critical glance along the hall, whose space glimmered soft in the April sunlight.

"Oh, and inteed it is very pritty—very pritty inteed. There is none ass can make the wreaths as Miss Winefrede and Miss Vanneck. No, inteed. It was so the vicar he did say last Christmas when you did do up the church. Ah, yes, in truth, it was!"

"You are a wicked old flatterer, Owain," said Miss Glendyr. "We expect some truth from you, you know!"

"And inteed it is me who would speak that which was not true? No, inteed!" cried Mr. Dinas, in high disdain. "And perhaps," he went on, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "it is not the truth which I was going to tell you leddies, about—about—but, inteed, people who

do not speak the truth should not talk at all—no, inteed."

It needed some exercise of mocking blandishments on the girls' parts to overcome the old man's pretended indignation.

"Well, well, Miss Winefrede, and inteed the admiral bass just had a message by the telegraph that a Saesnach gentleman he is fery fond of iss coming to Caerlan."

"Oh!" said Miss Vanneck, with interest. "And who may that be?"

"Inteed, and it iss the Viscount Fitzvesci, who iss the son of the Earl of Auriol I do hear, He will be here in time for the party. Oh, yes, in truth, and the admiral he do say that Miss Glendyr will be glad."

"Danderly, danderly, danderly dan!
He should marry her! He's the man;
When the leaves are green!"

sang Miss Vanneck with sly emphasis.

Miss Glendyr's face flushed with something like annoyance.

"Be quiet, Judith!" she cried. "How silly you can be!"

"What is the matter with my poor little song," retorted the governess, "that you should be cross with it? Owain will praise it, I know."

"Oh, ah, and inteed Miss Judith do sing like a wood bird," replied the old Welshman, quite oblivious of the intention of Miss Vanneck's satirical rendering of the old song.

"You must do well before the Saxon, Owain," said Miss Glendyr. "You are our bard, you know, and we shall expect your harp to do us credit."

The old man's face flushed with pleasure.

"It is but little in truth that the old harp of our land iss beside the big gilded things which you leddies play. It is a poor little thing," he said, with deprecating modesty.

"Owain, I am shocked to hear you talk like this," said Judith. "Did you not play it amongst all the bands at the Eisteddfod? No, no, Lord Fitzvesci must be welcomed with a brand new ode in the purest Welsh, and don't forget plentiful allusions to the fair lady of the enchanted castle."

"Judith, be quiet, and do not set Owain on to making himself absurd before this stranger."

The old man gave a kind of angry snort at the semi-affront which his young mistress's words conveyed.

"It is not well for a Glendyr and one who was born in the vale of Caerlan to speak thus of the customs of her forefathers. No, inteed. I do not want to play or to sing before the Saesnach lord whom the admiral says we are all so glad to see."

"Not all, Owain!" cried Miss Vanneck, with a sly glance at Winefrede. "A real live lord is naught but caviare to some people. Tell them of

How a lord in shepherd's guise
Sought favour in a maiden's eyes,

and it will be something more to the purpose."

Winefrede pouted rather viciously, and catching up a handful of jonquils proceeded to interweave their slender stems.

"Ah! but, Miss Winefrede," interposed Owain Dinas, "the admiral iss in the music-room, and he do want you to play him to sleep, yes, inteed."

Winefrede gave an impatient little sigh.

"Will you go on with this floral device of our coat-of-arms, Judith? I will not be long absent."

She tripped lightly from the room, and in a few moments the strains of a prelude on a piano came from an adjacent apartment. It was the pathetic air of "Ar hyd y nos" ("the livelong night") which Saxons usually sing to the words, "Poor Mary Anne," which rose on the air. The prelude finished a bright, fresh, sympathetic young voice rang out in one of the favourite songs of the old sea-lion.

THE OCEAN SONG OF GAFFAU.

Watch ye well! the moon is shrouded
On her bright throne;

Storms are gathering, stars are clouded,
Waves make wild moan.
'Tis no sign of heart-dread-cowering,
And gay songs and wine cup flowing,
But of winds in darkness blowing
O'er seas unknown.

In the dwellings of our fathers,
Round the glad blaze,
Now the festive circle gathers
With harps and lays;
Now the rush-strewn halls are ringing,
Steps are bounding, harps are singing,
—Ay! the hour to all is bringing
Peace, joy, or praise.

Save to us, our night watch keeping,
Storm winds to brave,
While the very sea-bird sleeping
Rests in its cave!
Think of us when heart-sore heaving,
Think of us when head is streaming,
Ye, of whom our souls are dreaming
On the dark wave!

CHAPTER II.

THE DOWN-HERITED.

Yes, thou must die:
Then art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. SHAKESPEARE.

WARR! Haggard form of the sunken eye,
The hollow cheek, the crouching mien, grim
forerunner of that spectre still more odious to
humanity—that skeleton shape which men call
Death! Why dost thou trespass here? Thy
place is in the huts of the humble, by the
hearths of the aged and weak, in the cell of the
captive.

Even in this greatest of the earth's cities
there are enough and to spare of haunts congenial
to thee—in the dull parlours where con-
gregate the toilers for whose willing hands
wealth can find no labour, or in the dangerous
slums where herd the vicious and the criminal.
For this home which the changeful beams of
the watery April sun lights up has an aspect of
respectability and comfort, and its solitary
occupant is young, aspiring, and of the sex best
fitted to do battle with the world. Yet his mur-
mured words acknowledge alike thy presence
and thy victory.

"Hunger! it is then not a vain word. It is
a thing all too real—too hard to bear."

The speaker was a young man of about one-
and-twenty, tall and strongly-built. He had a
handsome, clear-cut, aristocratic face, good
dark-grey eyes, close-curling auburn hair and a
small moustache of the same hue. Altogether
a right manly and pleasant countenance, de-
spite the pinched and haggard expression which
it wore.

"I had thought to find relief alike from my
sufferings of mind and body in sleep," he went on.
"But what a night it has been. When I
snatched a few minutes of fitful slumber it
was but to dream of luxurious banquets which,
when I stretched out my hands towards them,
ever vanished, and left me, waking, to renewed
and keener hunger pangs. I suppose people
die of famine—none knowing or caring—in this
great city. I have read of such things with an
angry incredulity. It seemed to me then impos-
sible that in this second and vaster Babylon—with
its untold wealth, its haughty grandeur, its
feasting and revelry—any son or daughter of
Adam should die for lack of bread. Fate has
been dead against me. Not in that cruellest of
blows only, but at every step I have taken.
Who could have imagined that to a man young,
strong and well educated every avenue to occu-
pation would prove to be barred? I have tried
—heavens! how hard! I have tried—in every
quarter. I may now say, in the words of the
Prodigal, 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.'
I can repeat his words, but not imitate his act.
He could return to his father's house—his
father's arms. For me there remain no such
refuge."

The young man took from the table a
"Times" of four days' previous date,
"Stephen Swire," he said, musingly. "I
have read and re-read the advertisement a
hundred times, both before and since I replied,
but I can recall nothing of the name. Three

days have passed since I wrote him and he has made no sign. Idiot that I am to hope. Away, pitiful instrument of delusion," and he crushed the newspaper up into a torn wisp and threw it on the floor.

Then he crossed the room unsteadily, and taking the materials for writing from a side-board, seated himself at the table.

"My father shall at least learn that his son knew how to die!" he soliloquised.

The letter which the youth then penned was a brief one. He folded and addressed it, subsequently endorsing at the left hand upper corner of the envelope, "To be forwarded only in the event of my death." Then he placed it in the breast pocket of his coat.

As he did so a light rap sounded on the door of the room. In reply to the young man's "Come in," the door opened gently, and a pretty young woman, dressed in a holland frock, entered. Only the absence of a cap and the presence of a rather coquettish necktie and collar distinguished the girl from a domestic. She was, however, the daughter of the landlady of the quiet Bloomsburian lodging-house.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," she said, extending the plate of perforated green porcelain which did duty as card salver at Mrs. Adams'.

The young man took up the pasteboard. It was not an ordinary gentleman's visiting card, neither was it one of the larger and more florid description used by tradesmen, but was of large size, and bore in coarse Roman letters the words:

"STEPHEN SWIRE.
Agent."

The young man gave a brief direction that the visitor should be shown up. When the door again opened and gave entrance to the form of Mr. Swire, the youth regarded him with considerable curiosity. There was nothing in the man's appearance that rewarded it, however, for his personage was decidedly commonplace. He was a short, stout individual, very plainly dressed.

His face, although of the most pronounced bourgeois type, had a look of good-humoured kindness which fully redeemed it from vulgarity. It was broad and flat and round, with a little retroussé nose and small eyes, but it was nevertheless one of those countenances which afford their possessor a good passport to society.

"Mr. —," began Mr. Swire, advancing into the room with a deep bow.

"Hush!" said the youth, quickly and warningly.

As he spoke the young woman who had ushered the visitor up withdrew and closed the door.

"Mr. Swire," said the young man, "we are, I think, strangers, so I must warn you at the outset of any conversation we may have that I am never again to be addressed by the name which I apprehend was on your lips."

Mr. Swire looked at the speaker curiously.

"What name shall we say, then?" he asked. The young man's face took on a look of embarrassment and he did not immediately reply. The visitor evidently noted his hesitation and doubt.

"Pardon me, but we cannot do better than solve this difficulty by keeping the cognomen which you have already given to your worthy landlady. Ponsonby, is it not?"

The young man bowed in token of assent.

"You cannot have a better name. It is the surname of your mother's family, and will well answer your purpose if, as it would seem, you desire to preserve your incognito. Valentine Ponsonby is it then?"

"Yes," said the young man, huskily.

"Good! Well, now, young man to business. You do not I think recognise me?"

"No," replied Ponsonby.

"Of course not. Yet I have dandled your infant form in my arms, and in your early childhood you have many times climbed my knee. My father was the faithful man of business to your mother's family, a post to which in process of time I succeeded. I have, thank Heaven!

prospered in the world, and my old connection with the family of Ponsonby has been severed for many years. But I had known your mother as a girl."

Valentine sprang forward with uncontrollable emotion and outstretched hands.

"Where is she now—oh, Mr. Swire, can you tell me that?"

The old man looked at him pityingly, then glanced with some astonishment at the light tweed suit which young Ponsonby was dressed in.

"Is it possible that you do not know?" he said. "Did not your father say?"

"He told me, with bitter words, that my mother was dead to him."

"Be brave! She is dead to earth!"

Valentine Ponsonby gave a bitter agonised cry and bowed his head on his clasped hands. For some minutes the young man maintained this posture. When at last he raised his head, his face was deathly pale, his eyes tear-brimmed.

"And I to know naught of it!" he cried.

"To be denied the sad yet blessed privilege of pressing my mother's hand, of imprinting a last kiss upon her brow, of hearing her farewell words! Oh, my father, cruel as has been all thou hast of late dealt to me, surely this deprivation has been the bitterest wrong."

"Play the man!" said Mr. Swire, with some sternness, yet not unkindly. "Due tribute to one parent's memory does not demand harsh speech of the other. It is not for me to say whether or not that other has dealt unkindly with you. But it is my part to do with the present and its needs. I know—none better—that the beloved dead needs the tribute of solitary tears. Presently I will quit this place, and then you can meekly and alone mourn your mother's blessed memory. But my time is short, and I must ask you to leave the thought of even a son's sorrowing to turn to the welfare of that son in this worldly life."

Valentine looked at the speaker with abstracted, tear-filled eyes.

"I have sought you out, young man, for your mother's sake. There was a time, not long since, when I promised her I would do so. Perhaps some prevision of the evil which was to come weighed upon her spirit. I know not. But she charged me not to lose sight of her son. I smiled at the words, for how could I dream that a time would ever come when I, humble Stephen Swire, could be of use to the son of the —"

Valentine raised his hand deprecatingly.

"Good. I will name no names. I am a business man, and no silly sentimentalist, and I will proceed to business. When I learned of your mother's death—I was then far distant alike from your father's place and from this city—I resolved to visit the former, to seek an interview with you and impress upon you a certain aim. How did I find your childhood's home? With the hatchment which tells that one of the honoured of earth has departed placed over its ancient entrance? With the master of the house and the menials which do his bidding garbed in mourning attire? With the hush of sorrow or the wail of grief? No. The sounds of revelry and feasting echoed through the spacious banquetting hall. There was no audience of the proud master for me, and directed by the chance word of a domestic, I sought you at Oxford."

Valentine Ponsonby raised his head and gazed at the speaker with some interest.

"Again you had eluded me. I learned much of you at Oxford. How nobly you had worked; how not ignobly you had played. Men said that had you stayed you would have taken the highest honours as easily as you had become first in all athletic sports. They told me of your sudden departure, inexplicable to them. By dint too of careful and cautious inquiry I learned that you had not left the town even one penny in debt, and that you had the good word of all, but whither you had gone none could tell me."

"I desired to leave no clue," said Valentine.

"You were successful; but I learned something from the man whose rooms were next to

those which you occupied and who had been a chum of yours."

"Dear old Ogilvie."

"Yes. When he found I was indeed interested in your well-being he confided his suspicion that the honourable payment of all your liabilities had left you well nigh penniless, and that it was as a poor man you had to face the world. It was from him also I first learned with certainty that you were disinherited. Then I determined to seek you out and see if I could help you."

"Thanks very much."

"Not at all. It is for your mother's sake. Now I am a business man, and any aid I can give will only be in the matter of business advice. What are you fit for?"

Valentine smiled faintly.

"In a business point of view I fear not much. I am a good Grecian, and in the differential calculus—"

"Differential rubbish!" broke in Mr. Swire, irritably. "You don't surely suppose your Greek and mathematics are saleable commodities amongst men of the world. Do you know anything of commerce?"

"Nothing."

"Do you understand bookkeeping by double-entry?"

Ponsonby shook his head.

"No! And I'll wager that you never saw a bill of lading or a charterparty in your life. What crass ignorance. Of course you can write?"

At another time Valentine might have resented this brusquerie; now sorrow and weakness had tamed his spirit.

"Yes, I can sign my name," he replied, with sad irony.

"Good! We shall make something of you yet. Here is a lucrative affair which will hardly put you to the trouble of a signature."

Mr. Swire unfolded a printed paper as he spoke.

"Here is the prospectus of a new company for working tin mines in Tierra del Fuego, which some friends of mine are promoting. If you will consent to put your name on the list of the directorate—your family name—and attend at the board-room occasionally I can guarantee you a good fee for a considerable time until—until, in fact, the shareholders find whether there is any tin at—"

"Enough, Mr. Swire. If I had continued to use my father's name I should never figure as a wrecker's beacon to lure any to destruction. But, as I have said, in the hour when my father cast me forth on the world, and hurled at me the scanty sum which enabled me to satisfy, as a man of honour, the paltry amount which I owed—in that hour I dropped the family surname."

"Well," pursued Mr. Swire, unabashed, and unfolding a more voluminous document. "There's something still better and easier. This is the last annual report of a Scotch bank. The assets look healthy here, but," and Mr. Swire lowered his voice to a whisper, "between you and me, there are no assets; the affair is hopelessly insolvent, but the directors want to bolster it up for a—"

The young man sprang to his feet, his pale cheek flooded with the indignant blood, his dim eye instinct with new fire.

"Do you dare, sir?" he cried, passionately.

"What do you know of me that should lead you to dream that I would become the coward-tool of the fiends who batten on the poor possessions of the widow and the orphan? If it were not that you had known my mother I—"

"Be calm, my dear young friend, pray be calm. Really your abrupt manner is too agitating for a quiet business man. But I honour your sentiments—fine sentiments, Mr. —a Valentine Ponsonby. Yes—yes. Well, now I have still another string to my bow, and one that requires a beau for the string. D'ye see? He! he!"

Ponsonby did not join in Mr. Swire's self-satisfied snigger, but seated himself sternly and silently.

"You must not suppose, my dear Mr.—a—Ponsonby," went on the visitor, "that I ad-

mire bubble companies or fraudulent—ahem!—joint-stock banks any more than yourself. Oh! dear, no. Nor must you imagine that all my connections are commercial. On the contrary, I have friends in the best society. Let that pass. It is not of the aristocracy I would now speak. But I have among my old clients a retired merchant, who has amassed a large fortune—in fact, a plum. He has an only daughter whom he adores, and who will be his heiress. He has too a weakness, not unnatural in a successful plebeian, for an aristocratic alliance for this girl—a very nice girl indeed—not handsome—no, decidedly not handsome, but gold gilds all. I would explain to him why you have temporarily relinquished your family name. I would show him that you are connected with a dozen noble houses. You could be married and reside abroad until your father's death. Then you can again take your ancient and honoured name. I will engage that both the father and daughter—

"Cease, sir!" cried Valentine. "Our family name is not mine to sell. I have cast it away. My patrician connections are not to be made the means of a dishonourable matrimonial speculation. When I left the threshold of my father's mansion I left behind all other ties of blood or race!"

"You are hard to please, young sir," said Mr. Swire, coldly, as he rose and buttoned his coat. "I present to you three proposals, the last of which at least has no risk and is in every way eligible. Well, you are a classical scholar, do you remember the old sage adage 'Those whom the gods doom they first render mad'? You are a madman to refuse the opportunities which Providence puts in your way."

"You mean kindly, Mr. Swire, doubtless," responded Valentine, turning his pale and emaciated countenance towards his visitor. "But I will not seek the means of life by such vile means as those of which you have spoken!"

"Very good, Mr.—a—a—Ponsonby," said Swire, ramming his hat upon his scanty hair with great emphasis. "Better men perhaps have lived by such means, and will again. Perhaps I may by-and-bye meet something that will suit a fastidious taste—perhaps. Good-day, Mr. Ponsonby!" and without a gesture of farewell the stout gentleman strode to the door, opened it, and vanished.

The young man's haggard regards followed him, then his head sank on the arms which he had extended listlessly on the table. The door opened again and Mr. Swire re-entered.

"Bless my soul!" he said, "I left you without giving the message which your mother entrusted to me for you at our last interview."

The young man raised his head eagerly. "Tell—tell—" Mr. Swire paused. "Ah, yes, tell Valentine never to forget our family motto which belongs to our ancient coat of arms. Tell him to take it for his guide in life and death, *Surtout du honneur—Honneur above all!* These were her words. Good-bye. Ah, yes, and shake hands—ahem!—Valentine."

Mr. Swire pressed the youth's hand and vanished. For a space Valentine Ponsonby sat there, his face lighted up with a flush of enthusiasm at the last words of the old man. Then after the excitement of the interview the feebleness of famine supervened with added force. Valentine staggered to his feet and put on his hat.

"They have been kind to me here," he muttered. "I will not put them to pain or trouble. I can drag myself out beyond the suburbs and hide till the end comes. It is better to die under God's free sky with the spring love-songs of the birds in one's dulling ears. My garments will at least pay for a pauper's grave."

He staggered towards the door. But he had miscalculated his powers, and the next moment fell heavily on the floor in a dead faint.

(To be Continued.)

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not.

CURE FOR WEARINESS.

THE world is full of tired people; merchants tired of business; farmers tired of raising crops; mechanics tired of building houses; housekeepers tired of preparing food; operatives tired of the rushing wheels. Pass along the road or streets and see how very tired three-fourths of the people look. How shall they get rested? Some say, "By fewer hours of work." But some of them have no work at all. Others might prescribe easy sofas, and more arm-chairs and soft beds. But some of the people who have the weariest look have plenty of good furniture and luxuriant upholstery.

Now we offer a pillow not curtained with gobelin tapestry, nor stuffed with the down of angels' wings. But a man who puts his head on it gets rid of his cares and anxieties. It is a pillow stuffed with promises. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and I will give you rest." "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He will sustain thee." We have friends who, because they cannot sleep well, put a pillow of hops under their head at night; but they have never tried the better pillow filled with the myrrh and frankincense from the Lord's garden. Men and women, tired but with the world, try it!

WHEN THE LOST ONE CAME FROM SEA.

An old pair sat by the fire-side,
For winter had come once more
With its snowflakes spreading far and wide,

And its winds with their angry roar.
But the room was snug and the fire bright,
And outside they'd bolted the winter's night.

Lonely and sad on that winter's night,
Beside of the blazing fire,
Watching the sparks as they took their flight

Up the wide chimney higher,
Thinking of one so blithe and free,
The darling boy they had lost at sea.

Lost—for the ship had sailed away,
And never more returned;
Six long years on that very day
Had their old hearts for him yearn'd.
Their dear, dear boy they would see no more,
Asleep 'neath the waves, all his labour o'er.

Hark! a gentle tap at the window pane,

A sharp rat-tat at the oaken door,
A cheerful voice through the snow and rain—

Oh, was it a dream once more,
And the old man totter'd across the floor,

But the mother was first at the open door.

They were clasped in the arms of a stalwart youth

Whose eyes shone with delight,
And gladden'd and warmed their hearts in truth,

Far more than the fire bright.
Ah, you should have only seen the three

That night when the lost one came from sea.

O. P.

SCIENCE.

A WONDERFUL CLOCK.

AN American, Mr. Felix Meier, has made a clock which is said to eclipse all former achievements in this direction, without excepting that at Strasbourg, which for many years has been regarded as the great clock of the world.

Mr. Meier's clock is the result of nearly ten years of patient labour and the expenditure of £1400 in cash. The clock is eighteen feet in height, eight feet wide by five feet deep, and weighs 4,000 lbs. It is of handsome proportions; the framework is entirely of black walnut, and is elegantly carved. Above the main body of the clock is a marble dome, upon which George Washington sits in his chair of state, protected by a canopy, which is surmounted by a gilded statue of Columbia; on either side of Washington is a coloured servant in livery guarding the doors, which open between the pillars that support the canopy; on the four corners of the main body of the clock are black walnut niches containing human figures, emblematic of the march of life; the two lower ones are supported by two female figures with flaming torches; one of them contains the figure of an infant, the second the figure of a youth, the third of a man in middle life, the fourth of an aged greybeard, and still another, directly over the centre, contains a grinning skeleton representing Father Time. All of these figures have bells and hammers in their hands. The infant's bell is small and sweet toned; the youth's bell larger and harsher; the bell of manhood strong and resonant; that of old age diminishing in strength, and the bell of the skeleton deep and mournful.

The astronomical and mathematical calculation, if kept up, would show the correct movement of the planets for 200 years, leap years included. The clock shows the time at Detroit in hours, minutes, and seconds; the difference in time at New York, Washington, San Francisco, Melbourne, Pekin, Cairo, Constantinople, St. Petersburg, Vienna, London, Berlin, and Paris. The day of the week, calendar day of the month, month of the year, and seasons of the year. The signs of the zodiac, the revolutions of the earth on its own axis and also around the sun. The revolutions of the moon around the earth, and with it around the sun; also the moon's changes from the quarter to the half, three-quarters and full. It also shows the correct movement of the planets around the sun.

There is a movement in this clock which cannot regularly be repeated more than once in eighty-four years. The inventor has a crank attached to the clock, by means of which he can hasten the working of the machinery in order to show its movements to the public; by turning continuously twelve hours a day for sixteen days and eight hours, a perfect revolution of the planet Uranus around the sun would be made. At the end of every quarter hour the infant in his carved niche strikes with a tiny hammer upon the bell which he holds in his hand. At the end of each half hour the youth strikes, at the end of three-quarters of an hour, the man, and at the end of each hour the greybeard. Death then follows with a measured stroke to toll the hour, and at the same moment a carved cupid projects from either side, with wings to indicate that time flies.

At the same time a large music box, manufactured at Geneva expressly for this clock, begins to play, and a surprising scene is enacted upon the platform beneath the canopy; Washington slowly rises from the chair to his feet, extending his right hand, presenting the Declaration of Independence. The door on the left is opened by the servant, admitting all the Presidents from Washington's time, including President Hayes. Each President is dressed in the costume of his time. The likenesses are very good. Passing in file before Washington, they face, and rise their hands as they approach him, and, walking naturally across the platform, disappear through the opposite door, which is promptly closed behind them by the second servant. Washington retires into his chair, and all is quiet save the measured tick of the huge pendulum and the ringing of the quarter hours, until another hour has passed.

MR. SPURKON has been ordered to spend the winter abroad, and is about to leave London for Mentone.



[MR. CADBURY LEARNS THE TRUTH.]

THE COST OF CORA'S LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl,"

"Poor Loo," "Bound to the Trawl,"

"Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHAT HAD BECOME OF JUANITA.

Madness came on me, and a troop
Of misty shapes did seem to sit
Beside me.

FLEMING CADBURY had led Juanita down to the Embankment gardens, and having induced her to take a seat by his side in a spot where few people passed, he asked almost sternly:

"What made you leave Lamorna so suddenly?"

"Don't you know?" asked the girl, opening her dark eyes in wondering terror. "Isn't he dead, then? Surely it cannot have been all a dream?" And she passed her hands over her face nervously, while Cadbury noticed for the first time how painfully thin they were, and how her whole frame seemed shrunk and pinched as though with want, and then he saw that her clothes, though perfectly neat, were worn almost threadbare.

"Whom do you mean?" he asked, gently. "Don't excite yourself like this, you know I am always your friend—and besides," in an altered tone, "I have news for you."

She paid no heed to this last remark, but seeming to derive courage from the rector's presence she replied to his question with less excitement and terror than before.

"The old man to whom the big house and all the country round belonged; is he dead? I heard

his cries and saw the awful blow fall upon his head, and then the blood flowing! Oh, it was horrible! I cannot drive the recollection of it from my mind by day or by night, and if I close my eyes the scene comes up before me more vividly. That man who was my husband will serve me in the same way if ever he knows that I am alive, and I may meet him at any moment just as unexpectedly as I have met you. Oh, let me go! There must be some place in the wide world where I can hide from him."

She started to her feet, and had not the rector taken her hand firmly in his own she would have hurried away from him.

"Juanita, sit down," he said, in a tone of command that admitted of no disobedience. "You are quite safe with me, for I can and will protect you. Try to be calmer and more like yourself, and now tell me of whom you are speaking, of whom you are afraid."

"Of whom should I be afraid but of my husband, Launcelot Latimer?" she asked, in wonder.

"Don't you know what he did?"

"No, I do not; but I wish you could tell me without getting so nervous and excited."

"I will try," with a shudder.

"Can I take you anywhere? You don't like sitting in this public place."

"Never mind, I will tell you what happened. Then you shall tell me what I must do to hide myself."

She paused as though to gather strength for the effort of describing the scene that had so burnt itself into her memory, then she began her story:

"It seems much longer ago, but it only happened the last day that I saw you. I was to meet my husband that afternoon, you remember, for I had determined to keep silence no longer. We did meet by the footbridge that spans the river. We became angry with each other, and then he pretended to yield to my demand to be publicly recognised as his wife, and took my hand to lead me to the castle. We had only gone a few steps on the bridge, however, before he suddenly lifted me up in his arms, and before

I could utter a cry he flung me over the parapet into the deep, icy water, and it seemed to be rushing down my throat and choking me, while the shock nearly stunned me, and the cold numbed every limb. I could not scream, I could not swim, no one was at hand to help me, and I am not quite conscious of what happened, but I must have been caught by the current and carried into a shallow part of the stream near to the place where the cattle go down to drink. Instinctively I clutched at some rushes and long grass, and so managed to scramble up the bank. But I was afraid to show myself lest my husband should be waiting to throw me back into the river again. Then I heard somebody cry out, and a sound as if men were fighting. I looked about cautiously while the cold wind seemed to freeze my wet garments upon me, and there, not twenty yards from where I lay hidden, I saw Lance Latimer struggling fiercely with the very man in whose house he had been living, and whose heir he had told me he would one day be. As I looked they fell down together, the old man underneath, and then the monster whom I had once loved rose to his feet, seized a stick that lay on the ground and struck his opponent with it such a crushing, deadly blow that I seem to hear and see it now!"

She paused for the moment, overcome with agitation, but the rector uttered no sound, he only held one of her cold hands in his own and pressed it gently as though to assure her of his sympathy and give her confidence.

"After he had done his vile work," she went on, "the wretch ran away, carrying the stick in his hand, and I knew then that if ever we met again he would show me no mercy. I dared not come to you, for you could not protect me. If I wished to preserve my life there was nothing for me but flight. But I thought I might do something to save the old man if he was not quite dead, and after a time I crept to his side to look at him and speak to him; but he could not hear me. He never moved, and the blood—oh, the sight of it filled me with horror, and

the deadly terror that was upon me seemed to make my brain reel. I think I was mad that night, for I don't remember where I went, or how far I wandered. I never felt my wet clothing, though it must have clung to me and frozen upon me in the night air and the piercing wind. My brain was on fire; I felt perfectly wild with terror, and dizzy with the awful dread that I might meet that man again, and that he would beat my head in, as he did that poor old man's; and the same fear haunts me even to this hour."

"But what became of you?" asked Cadbury, for she had paused as though her story was ended.

"I don't quite know," was the reply. "It was morning when I came to a railway. There was a small station in sight, and I walked into it and asked for a ticket for London. I had sense enough to take a third-class ticket, because I thought, among the rough people, that man was less likely to look for me. There were very few passengers, and I must have fallen asleep or fainted, for I remember nothing more for many weeks after. The people who nursed me in my sickness told me I was found in the railway carriage insensible, and that they knew from my clothes that I had been in the water; but I had money on me, and I was taken to the house of one of the railway porters, and his wife nursed me till my senses came again, and I grew comparatively strong and well. I live with them still, but they are very poor, and I cannot help them much with money, for I fear to claim even what belongs to me, lest by my doing so he should trace me."

"Why did you not send for me, child?"

"I dared not. That man might have found me out if I had done so, and he will really kill me the next time we meet. I know he will."

"Nonsense, Juanita, you must try to overcome this blind, unreasoning terror of a man who, I assure you, is powerless to hurt you, and who, in a few hours, will have quite enough to do to take care of himself, for we will take immediate measures to punish him. You will be glad to hear that Lord Lamorna is not dead, but is in a fair way for recovery. However, I won't talk about this until you are calmer, and you must promise me never again to hide where I cannot find you. How you could have been so silly I cannot imagine; you should have come to me at once. Now promise me, and then I will take you back to the place where you have been staying, and try to make some arrangements for your comfort."

"But suppose he should find me?" she objected.

"There is no chance of that whatever, and I will tell you why. He will not leave Lamorna Castle; he never goes away even for a night; he thinks that Lord Lamorna will die and that he is sure to gain something by being on the spot at the time. Besides this, from what you now tell me, and what I previously knew, I am convinced that the villain thinks that you are dead. It was because he believed this that he dared to defy me as he did when I went to ask him what had become of you. Thus, you see, he has no motive for seeking you, and he is quite sure not to come to London, so there is not the least danger of your meeting him by accident as you met me."

He spoke to her in this simple fashion because he saw that her mind was uningued, and the only way to deal with her was to treat her like a frightened child. There was silence for a few seconds.

Cadbury's heart ached for this poor victim of a bad man's violence and treachery, and he remembered, with a pang, that Walter's inquiries had established beyond all doubt the fact that she was Latimer's legal wife. She seemed to divine her companion's thoughts, though she was not looking at him, for she said, suddenly:

"You told me you had news for me. Is it from my own country? Am I free from that man?"

"No, you are not free. You are his wife," was the slowly-uttered reply.

The girl—for she was still but a girl in years

though so old in suffering—interlaced the fingers of her small hands tightly as though by the strain of her muscles she would subdue all expression of the pain that shook her. At last, with a hard, tearless face, and in a strained voice, she said:

"I am rightly punished. In my grief and love and despair I said in my prayers that I would give my soul and all my hopes of Heaven to know that I was Launcelot's wife, and to be able to prove it before the world. Now my prayer has been granted, and I am sorry for it. He can claim me wherever I am; he can make me obey him, and, though I loathe and hate him, he can make me his slave."

"He can do nothing of the kind, child. You are living in a civilised land. I tell you he cannot, dare not, harm you if you openly claim protection from him. But he shall not even know you are alive at present. The day of reckoning is not far distant, when he will have to answer far more serious things than even his cruelty to you. But now let us go to your home. I must see the people with whom you live." And he rose to his feet.

"It is a long way," she said, reluctantly.

"Then we will ride. Where is it?"

She mentioned the name of a street near King's Cross, and the rector, hailing a passing cab, ordered the driver to take them to the Great Northern Railway Station. Five minutes' walk from where they left the cab brought them to a row of small cottages, some of which were empty, and all of them were evidently doomed to speedily make way for new streets and larger buildings.

Juanita swung back the small garden gate on its broken hinges, and led the way up the path, by one side of which a few bright marigolds were blooming in the midst of a mass of luxuriant weeds. Several dirty children sat on the doorstep, but they made way for "the lady" as she passed them with a sad smile, and telling Cadbury to wait for her, went into the house.

A few minutes later and the rector of Lamorna was sitting in the small close kitchen talking to the wife of the railway porter, in whose house Juanita had found a refuge. Her story only confirmed what Juanita had told him. A lady, evidently a foreigner, with soaked and consequently shabby garments was found insensible in a railway carriage. Her ticket showed that she had travelled some distance; means were taken to revive her; she was rather incoherent in her speech, but said she wanted lodgings.

The porter who had assisted in bringing about her recovery said his wife had a decent room to let, and she would take care of the lady till the next day, and as her health was evidently in danger from her wet clothing, the superintendent, knowing that Bob Waters was respectable, had assented to the arrangement, and the half-conscious woman was taken to his cottage and consigned to the care of his wife. Inquiries were made in the neighbourhood of the station from which her ticket had been taken, but, of course, without eliciting any information about her, and Cadbury shuddered to think what she must have endured that night, when the woman mentioned the name of a place twenty miles from Lamorna.

"She was awful ill, sir, for weeks and weeks, and I couldn't make out half she said," continued Mrs. Waters, "for you know she ain't English, and her money didn't last, and she's tried to work; but lor, sir, she ain't been used to work as you can see, and she would never say who she belonged to, poor dear."

Juanita was not present while this conversation was going on, but she went up marvellously in the woman's esteem before the rector had finished speaking, and when she came downstairs she found that an arrangement had already been made for Mrs. Waters to take her to the sea-side for a week or two. At first she declined to go, her dread of Latimer still made her fear to leave London, the only place where she thought she had any chance of safety from him, but the rector assumed a tone of authority

and insisted that she should comply with his desire in this matter.

"You must get strong both in mind and body," he urged. "In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, you will have to denounce the man who tried to murder you. It is useless shrinking from this ordeal, for you cannot evade it. It is a duty you owe to others rather than to yourself. Therefore, you must have a change to brace you up, and, believe me, nothing will do you so much good as the fresh sea breezes. You cannot go alone, and these people know you and will be kinder to you than strangers, and I at least shall feel that you are safe. You will do as I ask you?"

"Yes," wearily; "I will be guided by you. I will do as you tell me. You will not tell me to do what is wrong, and," with a shiver, "you will not let him beat in my head as he did that old man's?"

Cadbury assured her that if she would only trust to him, and not run away and hide herself as she had done before, he would guard her from any future violence on the part of her husband, and thus, after he had supplied Mrs. Waters with ample funds for a month, they parted, Juanita to feel that a new glimpse of life, with a possible ray of sunshine in it, had opened before her, and Cadbury to go back to his handsome but comfortless rectory. Comfortless, because the smiles of a loving wife and the prattle of children's voices were not there, and he felt in his lonely heart that they never would be.

Years ago he had given his faith to a woman who had not known how to value him, and who had shown her utter worthlessness, happily for him, before it was too late. He had thought he should never love again until he met Juanita, and then he felt that until that moment he had never really known what true love was.

Unconsciously to himself he had half believed and secretly hoped that her marriage with Lance Latimer had some legal flaw in it that would make it null and void, and that she would be free to accept the love that he had never spoken of to her or to anybody else, but that, he felt sure, she must know in her secret heart that he entertained for her.

Now that hope was crushed. She was the wife of another man; he must not think of his love for her, he must try to subdue it, in any case he must hide it; for her sake rather than for his own he must act as a brother towards her, and must try to cherish only brotherly feelings. But it was a hard struggle.

Naturally a man of strong affections and strong passions, though accustomed to keep his feelings well under control, he had never found the task so difficult as now. It seemed for a time as if he must cry out aloud in agony of soul. After long months of gnawing anxiety and of alternate hope and fear almost culminating in despair, he had found the woman he loved, but only to feel with intolerable bitterness that a barrier that was impassable to both stood between them.

Impassable because Fleming Cadbury would rather have cut off his right hand, or have sacrificed his life than have suggested one thought that could sully the purity of the woman whom above all others he loved and honoured.

The agony he suffered, however, was not the less keen because earth did not seem to possess a balm for it. After a time he grew calmer and his thoughts wandered off to Lance Latimer and to the infamous crimes of which that man had been the perpetrator.

"A few days more," he thought, "and the house of cards he has built so cunningly will tumble about his ears. But I must be very careful. Once when I thought to unmask him he laughed in my face and defied and outwitted me. I must leave him no avenue of escape this time. He believes he has murdered his wife; he meant to murder his cousin who had treated him with nothing but consideration and kindness, and I firmly believe he instigated that woman Robson to make her impudent claim upon Cora. However, the lines are draw-

ing together, his crimes are closing in upon him, and it will go hard with me if he escapes the clutches of the law this time."

CHAPTER XL.

THE DAY OF RECKONING.

"I'll tell thee truth. He was a man
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
Yet full of guile."

LADY BELLINDA, Cora, and Mrs. Smith, as she was still called, sat in her ladyship's boudoir waiting with silent though intense anxiety for the result of the critical operation that Lord Lamorna was at this very moment undergoing. The widow had been persuaded to leave Stoneycroft in charge of a servant and take up her residence for a time at the castle.

"You and I must learn to love each other, if only for the sake of him who was so dear to us both," Lady Bellinda had urged.

Then she told her sister-in-law of the dangerous operation that his lordship was to suffer, and pleaded that both she and Cora would derive great comfort from her presence and companionship at such a time. So Walter's mother yielded to persuasion, and to Lance Latimer's slight alarm and by no means slight disgust, Mrs. Smith became an inmate of the same house as himself.

Not that they saw much of each other, for the mansion was a large one, and Lady Bellinda had so isolated the young man from herself and her friends and guests that unless he accidentally encountered them in the grounds, in the halls or corridors, or in the library, there was no chance of their meeting. He kept his ears and eyes open pretty widely, however, so that few people came to the house without his being aware of it, and no one could have been long a guest there without his learning the fact.

For instance, he had observed that it was always on Tuesday that Sir Samuel Fenton paid his weekly visit to his noble patient. Mr. Latimer invariably manifested a great deal of interest in that gentleman's coming and going, and on questioning the servant who brought in his luncheon this morning he was told that the great surgeon had already arrived. But the servants never volunteered any information, so Mr. Latimer was left in ignorance of the fact that Sir Samuel had brought with him on this occasion another surgeon quite as celebrated in cases of cerebral injury as himself, nor did he know that these gentlemen intended to remain at the castle for the night.

So after he had eaten his luncheon he ordered his horse and rode over to Beverley Chase, little dreaming of the scene that was being enacted in one comparatively small room in the house he was leaving.

The doctors had decided only to allow the two trained lady-nurses to be present in the room during the operation, upon the success of which the life and reason of the sufferer depended. Lady Bellinda agreed with them, much as she would have liked to be there to hold her brother's hand, to whisper words of comfort to him and catch the first gleam of recognition from his eyes. But the difficult and critical process of trephining had been carefully explained to her, and she knew that the least excitement, the least nervous tremor of the hand that held the delicate instrument, would be fraught with fatal consequences to the man on whose cranium the operation was being performed.

What the Marquis of Lamorna was suffering from was the pressure of a portion of his skull upon the brain, which pressure had the effect of arresting the activity of that most delicate and sensitive organ for the time being, and paralyzing the intellectual powers. If this piece of broken bone which caused the mischief could be removed without injuring the dura mater—that is, the membrane in which the brain is encaased—it would be a comparatively easy matter to cover over the small opening which its removal left exposed, and the brain, freed from the unnatural pressure upon it, would then resume its functions.

With very grave faces, and fully impressed with the serious nature of the work they had in hand, the two eminent surgeons made their preparations. When all was ready, that wonderful little instrument, the trephine, was brought into action, and with its fine, needle-like teeth sawed the bone while it gathered up every tiny splinter and every particle of bone-dust.

It was a long, tedious process, and the operator's face was pale, and beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead—perspiration caused not by exertion, but by the intense mental and nervous strain that was upon him. For well did the great master of surgical skill know that there was only the thinness of paper between his instrument and eternity.

At last it is over, and the marquis, who is still under the influence of chloroform, is laid upon his bed, while doctors and nurses watch him anxiously. Sir Samuel steals away for a few minutes to tell the anxious women waiting for him in the boudoir that so far the operation has been successful, and that when the marquis opens his eyes again he will be in the full possession of his senses.

Accustomed, as he is, to "the ways of women," Sir Samuel is still a little embarrassed at the effect of his announcement, for each of the three ladies begins to show some symptoms of hysterics.

"If you don't exercise more self-control, Lady Bellinda, I must ring for the servants, and then the secret of the operation having been successful will be a secret no longer," said the surgeon, impressively. "Don't forget this: I thought you had too much good sense to give way to your feelings in this manner."

His words had their intended effect. Lady Bellinda, with a great effort, regained her composure, and entreated Cora and her sister-in-law to restrain their emotion, adding, to the undisguised surprise of Sir Samuel Fenton:

"We don't know how much may yet depend upon our caution."

This adjuration, coupled with her own example, soon had the desired effect, and Sir Samuel returned to his patient promising to keep them informed of his progress and let them know directly any important change in his condition took place.

"I think I will go to my room for a little while," said Cora, when she had kissed the two elder women tenderly, and expressed her joy at her father's probable recovery. "I will come back soon, auntie."

Then she went away to pray in secret and to offer up her grateful thanks to the great Father who cares for even the humblest of His children. She rose from her knees calm and refreshed, for it seemed to her as though ministering angels had been sent to comfort her, and when a few hours later in the day she stood by the side of her adopted father and saw his faint smile of recognition, and heard him once more say, as of old, "Cora, my child," she felt that the dark cloud of trouble that had over-shadowed her young life had rolled away, never to shroud it again.

But she was wrong; this was only the first break in the clouds. The storm had not spent all its fury yet. In the first place Lord Lamorna's recovery was not so rapid as had been hoped, and nearly a fortnight elapsed before the medical attendants were able to pronounce him out of danger, and even then he was too ill to bear any excitement.

Meanwhile Lance Latimer felt that a crisis was approaching, but he looked for denouement widely different from that which was actually drawing near. The most rigid caution on Lady Bellinda's part could not hide from the servants for three whole weeks the fact that something more critical than ever had occurred to Lord Lamorna, and the very natural inference they drew, from the presence in the house of two doctors from London instead of one, was, that his lordship was much worse, and when one of them took up his quarters there the report went forth that the old man was dying.

By dint of much questioning Latimer learnt that this was the general impression, and he was himself quite ready to believe it. What he

expected to gain by his kinsman's death he did not himself feel very clear about.

He had too much faith in the family pride and the sense of justice which were ever uppermost in the mind of the woman who would succeed to the landed estates, to believe that she would allow the barony of De Wreydon to descend to a very poor man after her own death, however bitterly she might hate him personally, if it were in her power to make him rich enough to bear his honours fittingly.

And there he was right. If Walter's near kinship had not been proved and her brother had died, Lady Bellinda would have felt it to be an imperative duty to make the De Wreydon barony much more than an empty title, even though she would have gone sorrowing to her grave at the thought of the unworthiness of her successor. But while she lived she would be Baroness de Wreydon, and she might live for years.

"Just the sort of woman 'who'd live to much more than a hundred and ten, and die of a fall from a cherry tree then,' like the old Countess of Desmond," Latimer had once said to Sponsons, and what he wanted was money for his immediate necessities—provision for his daily wants—and he saw no prospect of obtaining it except through her.

"I must have a woman to talk to her and that without further loss of time," was Latimer's mental decision when the servant told him that he believed his lordship was "very bad indeed." She is trying to hide the old man's condition from me and she won't talk with me herself. But if I could get Lady Beverley to come and sound her about my future prospects some definite arrangement might come out of it. Now, how is it to be managed? She abhors the very sight of me, that is one fact. She cannot prevent me from succeeding her as the representative of the family, that is the other. Let me think!"

For a time he paced the room in silence, pondering over one scheme and another and cudgelling his brains to think of means by which he could achieve his purpose. At last, he muttered:

"Yes, that is the only way. As my future mother-in-law she would have some right to make inquiries into my prospects. Then also, my connection with the Beverleys would give me some importance, and it would also suggest a prospect of my leaving the castle. Though for that matter, if her brother dies the old woman won't lose much time in letting me know that she can dispense with my presence."

Again he mused in silence, then as though speaking to himself he said:

"It is true, I don't care for Mabel, she is stupid and vain and exacting, utterly unlike Juanita. But I mustn't think of her; she can't be alive or she would have been down upon me long before this. Yes, that's what I must do. I'll ride over to the Chase this very afternoon and settle the matter."

And he went. He was graciously received, his proposals were listened to by her ladyship, and the question of ways and means, and what the Lysters ought to do for him, was discussed between them. Then Sir Augustus was sought and his consent, which was but a matter of form, was asked, and after this, Latimer was allowed to repeat his proposition, though with some sentiment added to it this time, to the young lady herself.

The consequence of this visit was, that the next afternoon Lady Beverley drove to Lamorna Castle to call upon Lady Bellinda. Lady Bellinda's first impulse was to refuse to see Lady Beverley, for she knew that she had done all in her power to injure Cora in the eyes of those who thought more of pure descent than of purity of heart and nobleness of character. Second thoughts, however, made her change her mind, and she walked into the white drawing-room where the baronet's wife was waiting for her.

Lady Beverley intended to have been very gushing and cordial, but Lady Bellinda was in no humour for pretending what she did not

feel, and her manner was so cold and reserved, and she so very plainly hinted a desire to know to what special circumstance she owed the honour of this visit, that Lady Beverley soon found herself constrained to intimate her motive for calling.

"Your charming kinsman, Mr. Latimer, has proposed for my darling Mabel," she said, at length; "if we consent will the marriage have your approval, Lady Bellinda?"

"It will not concern me in the least," was the cold reply. "I have been given to understand, however, that Mr. Latimer already has a wife."

"Not a wife, Lady Bellinda, only some deplorable intrigue; dear Lance told me all about it, and I must say that I don't blame him in the least."

Lady Bellinda shrugged her shoulders, but made no other comment, and Lady Beverley, finding she was not to receive any assistance, began again.

"You have no objection to your cousin marrying one of my dear girls, I hope, Lady Bellinda?"

"No," slowly. "It is nothing to me whom he marries."

"But surely, Lady Bellinda, as your heir—"

"Mr. Latimer is not my heir and never will be," interrupted the old lady, sharply.

"Well," soothingly, "as a member of your family, and as the man who must ultimately succeed to some of its honours, you must feel a certain amount of interest in him, must feel that it is your duty to make some provision for him, particularly on the occasion of his marriage."

"I don't agree with you," sharply.

"But, Lady Bellinda—"

At this moment the door opened and "Mrs. Smith," who did not know that there was any visitor there, came into the room.

"Come in, dear, here is Lady Beverley," said Lady Bellinda, as her sister-in-law paused.

"Oh! Mrs. Smith, I think," said Lady Beverley, in a supercilious tone and with the most frigid of bows. And she put up her eye-glass to survey the widow in a manner so insulting that Lady Bellinda forgot all caution and prudence and said with a proud smile.

"No, this is Lady William Lyster, the widow of my youngest brother."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed the baronet's wife, starting to her feet, while her face flushed red with passion. "Preposterous! This is some gross imposture. If this is your brother's wife her son must be—" she paused as though reluctant to utter the word, but Lady Bellinda supplied it for her.

"My brother's heir," she said, with another smile. "Therefore you can now understand, Lady Beverley, why Mr. Latimer's matrimonial arrangements do not interest me."

Lady Beverley was too completely astounded to make any reply. If this were true—and after a moment's reflection she felt it was too strange not to be true—Lance Latimer was little better than a beggar, and she evidently had no further business here. The question she had come to ask was answered. Lady Bellinda would not settle one penny upon him.

Driving home to the Chase she met Latimer on the road, he was waiting to hear the result of her visit. Her flushed face warned him that something was wrong before the carriage pulled up, but he was not prepared for what was really to come.

"We may as well say good-bye here, Mr. Latimer," said her ladyship, with a frown, "for we cannot receive you again at the Chase. Lady Bellinda will do nothing for you and you have altogether mistaken your position. Her ladyship introduced me to that Mrs. Smith who has been living at Stoneycroft as her sister-in-law, Lady William Lyster. That woman's son is heir to Lamorna. I don't pretend to offer any explanations, indeed I did not ask for any. Home!"

This latter to the coachman, and she drove away, leaving Lance Latimer standing in the

road like a man utterly stunned and bewildered.

He partially recovered himself after a minute or two and his pale face flushed, while those watery grey eyes of his flashed, and he clenched his long nervous hands spasmodically.

"Impossible! It cannot be!" he ejaculated. "That fellow Smith—why he and his mother are not strangers who only came to this place yesterday. There has never been any mystery about them? What can it mean? That that venomous old cat would give her life to find an heir to oust me I know, but she would never be capable of anything approaching to falsehood and deception. Besides, the veriest fool alive could set up a claim less easily disproved than that. She must have been imposed upon. I will insist upon seeing her. If after all there should be any truth in this preposterous story, the very devil himself is against me, and the sooner I get out of this the better. Even then, if that gutter-child could have been persuaded or forced into accepting me, I should not have been in such a desperate plight as I am. But now—no, it can't be true—it can't be true! I've not put my neck in the hangman's noose to be foiled after all by such a clumsy swindle as this."

Thus thinking, assuring himself that this new difficulty could not exist, and yet doubtful even while he protested, Lance Latimer hurried back to the castle. He was on the point of sending a servant with a message to Lady Bellinda asking her to see him for a few minutes when he was informed that her ladyship requested his presence in the blue drawing-room at five o'clock.

"Five o'clock," he said, consulting his watch with a frown on his face, for it wanted a full half hour to that time; "tell her I will come."

Then he turned to the window, threw it wide open, and stood looking out on the terraced-gardens, and suffered his eye to wander over the wide undulating park and follow the line of the broad carriage drive which he could see from where he was standing. As he thus looked out, biting the ends of his moustache and thinking of what he should say to the kinswoman who held his destiny in her hands, he noticed a plain dark brougham approaching the mansion. The blinds were drawn, and the distance was too great for him to distinguish the occupants even if they had not been thus hidden from sight.

"Another doctor," he muttered, as he watched it. "The old man must be very bad indeed. 'Tis to be hoped he won't die if I am not to profit by it."

At this point he lost sight of the carriage, and so absorbed did he become in the contemplation of his own gloomy fortunes that he forgot all about his appointment until a servant came to tell him that her ladyship was waiting.

Latimer started, glanced hurriedly round the room as though—as the servant afterwards declared—he was saying good-bye to it, then walked quietly after him to the blue drawing-room. Lady Bellinda sat by a table. Her face was very pale, and he could see that there was the shadow upon it of some bitter sorrow, though she was evidently trying hard to keep her feelings well under control. But that proud loving heart was almost broken, for since she had first sent for Latimer she had received a letter from Dick Marsden announcing his own arrival in England, but stating also that his cousin Walter was dead.

She read this awful news, crushed the letter into her pocket, and then sat with rigid limbs and an aching heart, while her weary eyes seemed to burn with unshed tears—sat trying to realise that all her hopes and plans were wrecked.

In a few minutes Cora came into the room to tell her that everything was in readiness.

"I will come directly," she said, in a strained tone; "don't wait, child—don't ask me any questions—I will come." And the girl went out, wondering what could have happened, and feeling rather alarmed.

A few seconds later Lady Bellinda followed her. No one could fail to note the change that had come over the old lady's face, but she uttered no complaint, offered no explanation. The contents of the letter which brought such

terrible tidings were known only to herself, and though she had succeeded in stifling her own agony for the moment, she shrank from the task of breaking the sad news to those who would feel it most.

She merely sat down and waited with the rest for Latimer, but feeling all the while that the news she had just received would make it impossible to carry out the programme which had been agreed upon between herself and her brother for the punishment of this unworthy scion of their race, and yet she was utterly unable to think of any alternative plan or tell the others what had happened; she could only sit there and wait.

The guilty man started when he came into the room, for Lady Bellinda was not alone. Cora and Walter's mother were there, but there also sat the marquis in an invalid's chair, his faced turned from the light so that Latimer could not see it plainly. For one brief instant as he noticed how strangely they all looked at him he was nervous, but then, regaining his usual assurance, he said:

"You wished to see me, Lady Bellinda, and I am here. But how is his lordship? Better, I hope. I am delighted to see that he is able to leave his room," and he advanced towards where the marquis sat.

Even at this moment he thought it strange that no one tried to restrain him, and also that the old man did not exhibit any sign of terror at his approach. On the contrary. Something in the expression of his face, something in the light of his eye, made the guilty man pause, and then to his horror Lord Lamorna rose to his feet, and stood clothed and in his right mind before his would-be assassin.

Had one that had been long dead risen from the grave and confronted him, Latimer could not have been more petrified. His tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth, his eyes started as though they would leave their sockets; his white face, lank hair, and shrinking form presented such an abject spectacle of deadly terror that Cora turned away her head in uncontrollable disgust, and it was not until Lord Lamorna spoke that the poltroon drew a gasp of relief and realised that it was after all only a creature of flesh and blood that stood before him.

"Scoundrel!" said his lordship, in cold, calm tones, "before you leave this house that you dishonour by your presence, tell me where is your wife? Did you save her?"

Latimer was silent. He looked at the speaker with the blank stare of a man bereft of sense and reason, and at that same instant Lady Bellinda touched a bell at her side, then a door was thrown open and Markham announced:

"Mrs. Launcelot Latimer and Mr. Cadbury."

Not a word was spoken, though no one but Lady Bellinda had known that this was going to happen; indeed the new-comers had only arrived in that green brougham which Latimer had watched just before Dick Marsden's letter had paralysed her ladyship's faculties. All eyes were fixed upon the guilty man, and he looked at his two victims as though the very sight of them froze his craven heart with terror.

Cora's voice broke the spell of silence. She recognised Juanita as the gipsy who had prophesied that her love would cost the man dearly who either sought or won it, but she at the same time remembered that she was a woman and had suffered. She had this very day heard from Lord Lamorna's lips an account of how he had seen the poor girl lifted over the parapet of the bridge and flung into the river, and her own lively sympathy and kind heart made her take the stranger's hand and ask:

"How did you escape? Who saved you from the river?"

"Escape!—river?" Those were the two words that seemed to fasten themselves upon the mind of the guilty man. "Escape!—the river!" Still the words burnt into his brain. No doubt the police were already in the hall waiting to arrest him.

Was escape possible? Could he reach the river? He would try for it at any rate, and a fierce resolve took possession of him. They

should never take him alive. The others were still speaking to Juanita when the sound of a crash of glass recalled their attention to Latimer, from whom for the moment it had strayed. The French window had been violently flung back, and he was gone!

Quick as thought Fleming Cadbury sprang after him. His lawful prey should not escape him thus. The officers of justice were even now on their way to the castle to arrest him, and Cadbury was determined that he should be punished.

Lady Bellinda followed the rector, entreating him to stop and hear what she had to say. He turned to look at her and to shout for aid when he stumbled; his foot had caught in something and he fell heavily to the ground. Almost before he could rise Lady Bellinda was by his side, her face pale and unusually agitated as she hurriedly whispered:

"Leave him alone; don't let him bring public disgrace upon us. Walter is dead, and they none of them know it."

Cadbury's astonishment and dismay took from him the power, if not the desire, to pursue his enemy, and he listened in wonder and unfeigned sorrow to her ladyship's hurried words, and to her request that, for this day at least, the terrible intelligence should not be told.

"His cousin will arrive to-morrow," she said, dejectedly; "it will be time enough then to tell it."

In subdued silence the rector went back to the drawing-room. A heavy weight was upon his mind and heart. Latimer had escaped, and Walter was dead! Latimer had escaped. In this life he would never trouble them again, for the next morning his dead body was found in the Wreydon, not far from the spot where he had once committed a double crime. And Juanita was free!

(To be Continued.)

ONE CAUSE OF BATHING ACCIDENTS

It is very generally believed that the proper way to bathe is to take a header into the sea, or, at least, to immerse the whole body immediately. Theoretically this may be done as far as the most vigorous organisms are concerned, but it must not be forgotten that a man may be perfectly healthy, and yet not endowed with sufficient latent energy to recover quickly from the "shock" which must in all cases be inflicted on the nerve-centres by suddenly plunging the whole surface of the skin, with its terminal nervous twigs, into a cold bath.

For a time, at least, the central activity must be reduced in force, if not in form. When, therefore, a man plunges, and immediately after strikes out to swim, it is not only possible but probable that he may become exhausted, and fall from depression of energy, with cramp. It is important that this should be noticed. We do not think sufficient attention has yet been given to this cause of "accident" in bathing. Cases of exhaustion from remaining too long in the water with a full stomach are understood.

SUBSTITUTE FOR POTATOES.

We are threatened with something like a potato famine, and those who remember the similar disaster of 1846 do not need to be told how grave is now the prospect, with a vastly increased population, and a state of depression of trade which signifies on the part of the masses a great difficulty in providing even the commonest and cheapest necessaries of life. Many and well-intentioned are the suggestions which are being made with a view of providing substitutes for the potato. The French haricots blancs or flageolets, lentils, rice, maize, and oatmeal, are the substances which are brought

most prominently forward as being fit to replace the favourite tuber. In one respect—the quantity of nitrogen which they contain—they all, but especially the leguminous examples, greatly surpass the potato as an economical nutriment. But, unfortunately, they are all deficient in antiscorbutic elements.

Under a diet of these substances, either alone or with the trifling amount of fresh animal food which is all that tens of thousands of persons can obtain, scurvy would be as rife as it was in Ireland and North Britain in 1846-47. Nevertheless, all these foods are very valuable, and it only needs that the particular point in which they fail should be recognised and supplemented. If this be not done, disease must ensue, and the nutriment fall into disfavour. Any of these substances may be used with advantage where either an abundance of milk forms part of the dietary, or the antiscorbutic element can be furnished by fresh green vegetables, onions, or the juice of oranges or lemons.

AVOIDING LIGHTNING.

It is never too soon to go into the house when a storm is rising. When the clouds are fairly charged with electricity they are most dangerous, and this fluid obeys the most subtle attraction which acts at great distance and in all directions. A woman told me of a bolt which came down her mother's chimney from a rising cloud when the sun was shining overhead. A young girl was killed while passing under a telegraph wire on the brow of a hill, while she was hurrying home before a storm. It is not safe to let children stay out of doors till the last minute before the storm falls.

People should not be foolhardy about sitting on porches or by open windows, whether the storm is hard or not. Mild showers often carry a single charge which falls with deadly effect. It may or may not be fatal to stay out; it is safe to be in the house, with the windows and doors shut. The dry air in a house is a readier conductor of lightning than the damp air outside, and any draught of air invites it. A hot fire from a chimney attracts it, so to speak, and it is prudent for those who would be sure of safety to use kerosene or gas stoves in summer, and avoid heating the chimneys of the house.

People are very ignorant or reckless about lightning.

I have seen a girl of eighteen crying with fear of lightning, and running every moment to the window to see if the storm was not abating, unconscious that she was putting herself in danger. If everyone would hurry to shelter as soon as the storm cloud was half way up the sky, when certain it was coming nearer; if they would shut the doors and windows and keep away from them afterwards, and from bell wires, stove-pipes, mantels, chimney breasts, heaters and mirrors, with their silver backs, which carry electricity, and keep away from lightning rods and their vicinity, and from metal water spouts, with good rods on their houses, they might dismiss the fear of lightning from their minds, so far as it is a thing of reason and not of impression.

R. H.

DR ZANDLER, a Swede, has invented a machine driven by steam which is employed for a gymnastic development of the body. When the mechanism is set in motion, the individual operated upon finds himself suddenly going through a series of evolutions more or less intricate which he is powerless either to stop or direct.

A PRAGUE newspaper has discovered the meanness of managers. "Faust" was the opera, and he had been "requisitioned" for a penny flower for Marguerite. "Let her use the one she had last night," said the thrifty soul. "She picked it to pieces," said the applicant. "Let her pay for a new one, then; I'll teach her to destroy properties."

SILK FROM THE SEA.

THE sea yields many precious things—coral, amber, and pearls—but it is not generally known that in certain parts of the Mediterranean a species of mussel is found, of which the shells contain one of the most beautiful textile materials known. These shells are about 7 inches long and 3 inches broad, and each of them contains a hank or byssus of the fibre, weighing half a drachm, and at first it presents nothing particular to the eye, being soiled with mud and the remains of marine plants. But when washed and combed the fibres are seen to be extremely lustrous, glistening in the sunshine in shades varying from a golden yellow to olive brown. Spun and woven in the ordinary manner, stockings, gloves, neckties, and similar articles can be manufactured from them, and they are likewise specially suited for making the finest lace. At present the production of these fibres hardly exceeds 200 kilogrammes (3 cwt. 3 qrs.) a year. Specimens of these curious mussels and their finished products were exhibited at the recent Paris Exhibition, but they appear to have been overlooked.

ETHEL ARBUTHNOT;

OR,

WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"
"Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

A REVELATION AND A CRIME.

His curse! Dost understand what that word means?
THE BROTHERS.

HERBERT LATTON appeared to have completely subdued Charles Palethorpe by his unexpected apparition at the moment when he thought himself most happy.

"Come with me," exclaimed Herbert, "we will walk in the country, you seem feverish and the air will cool you. This is not the place to talk, and I really do not see why we should open our mouths to fill other people's."

He spoke in a playful, light-hearted, almost jocular way, as if the cares of life were not for him, while the young artist can only be compared to a man who has received a heavy blow which has stunned him for a time and dimmed his faculties and perceptions. They passed out of the church and went down the high street of the little village where the villagers still lingered talking to one another in whispers, as if they knew that something was wrong.

As the young men went along, they were gazed at anxiously, and fingers were pointed at them by aged crones, who would have given anything to penetrate the mystery which shrouded the marriage. Why did not the bridegroom go home with the bride, and why was he looking so pale and dejected, as he walked like a prisoner by the side of the other, who was so tall, erect, and confident.

Not a word passed between them until they were at least a mile from the village.

The country they had penetrated to was flat and uninteresting. There had been some coal mines in this part, but they got worked out and were abandoned, yet some remains of the plant lay about and the land was black and desolate. In some places the ground had fallen in, leaving big gaping holes in the surface, down which belated travellers had fallen before now, finding a miserable end by starvation, as they wandered along the deserted galleries

of the mines, if their necks were not broken by the first fall.

Strange stories were told of these deserted mines. It was said that men had been murdered and their bodies thrown into these pits, there to decay until their bones were cast up on the last day, and it was stated on the authority of labouring men in the neighbourhood that a desperate band of gipsies had its headquarters at the bottom of an old worked-out shaft, to which they gained access by some means only known to themselves.

Charles Palethorpe did not know the nature of the ground he was traversing, and it is doubtful whether he would have cared if he had.

His heart was broken, he had slain the wrong man, and his wife was not his wife; henceforth he would war through the world a blighted being, and for him there was no more happiness. On the other hand, Herbert Layton walked confidently, as if he was very well acquainted with the country, and having reached a peculiarly wild and uninviting part, he pointed to a heap of blackened bricks and invited his companion to be seated.

"I have brought you here!" he exclaimed, "because we are alone and what we say can only be heard by the passing wind."

"Good!" ejaculated Charles.

"You have been acting under a misapprehension, my young friend," continued Herbert. "For the man you killed was my brother."

Charles Palethorpe sprang up and clutched at his hair wildly.

"Your brother! Great heaven! A curse on my hand for shedding innocent blood!"

Herbert laughed heartily.

"You are not the first who has been misled in the same way," he resumed; "we were twins, he being the older and consequently taking all the property, which, as I daresay you know, is one of the charming peculiarities of our English land; our real name is Carter Gordon, he was christened Henry while I am Herbert Gordon. Being wild in my extreme youth I ran away from school and frequented racecourses—in fact, I disgraced the family name and took that of Layton; my brother Henry made me a small allowance to keep away from him, and promised never to speak of me, I, in my turn, undertaking to claim no connection with him. As I am the heir-at-law, you have done me the greatest service you could by killing him as I have come into the property. Thanks to you, I am now rich, and Herbert Layton, the despised turf gambler, is become Herbert Gordon, the rich landed proprietor. My struggling days are over, in future I have wealth as my command and can enjoy my life."

This was his story, and Charles Palethorpe listened to it attentively.

"Do you still claim Ethel for your wife?" he asked.

"Undoubtedly I do, because I have the misfortune to be in love with her," was the reply.

"Yet she is mine."

"How can that be?"

"I married her to-day," said Charles, dreamily.

"But I have a prior claim since I married her first, and your claim can hardly be good in law, my dear sir."

"She does not love you."

"Possibly not. She did at one time, and if her affection has been alienated, it is owing to you. Now I have no wish to prosecute you for killing my brother. You actually rendered me a service, as I had the honour of telling you before. Leave England for ever, go to some colony where you will have a wide field for the exercise of your talents, and I will say nothing more to you."

"Never!" ejaculated Charles.

"Then we must continue enemies," remarked Herbert, carelessly.

"To the bitter end. You murdered my father, and there can be no peace between us. Now you want to separate me from the girl I love better than my life. Oh, yes, decidedly we are enemies."

"The only witness of your father's death,"

replied Herbert, "is Ethel, and it is doubtful whether her evidence would have any weight with a jury after this lapse of time."

"It is with me you have to settle accounts, not with the law."

"Very well. I will settle with you. In what way do you wish to make a settlement?"

"We must fight until one of us dies."

"As you will. It is a romantic idea and a very foolish one, because I am sure to kill you. If one of us must die let us decide the matter out of hand."

"How?"

"Oh, it is easily done," said Herbert, calmly.

"Perhaps you will be good enough to explain your meaning? I may be very dense, but I give you my word I do not understand you," replied Charles.

"With pleasure; you are unarmed."

"Yes; people do not generally go to a wedding as if they were preparing for battle."

"I am stronger than you."

"Possibly, though that remains to be proved," said Charles, eyeing the stalwart form of his antagonist.

"The ground hereabouts is honey-combed with holes, which communicate with the workings of a disused and long-abandoned coal mine. I shall presently seize you and throw you down one of these holes, after which you will never be seen or heard of again!"

"Villain!"

"I admit that I am a very cool and calculating villain," replied Herbert. "You see practice makes perfect, and as I have been engaged in some sort of villainy all my life, I ought now to be an adept in it. You have the wrong man to deal with. Really, I think you had better take my offer and leave the country."

"That cannot be done," said Charles Palethorpe, "I love Ethel. I can die for her sweet sake, but I cannot leave her."

Herbert Gordon quickly removed his gloves, and then made a forward movement towards Charles, who prepared to receive him. Immediately afterwards they clinched, and a terrible struggle ensued, Charles being borne to the ground. They rolled over and over, Herbert raining heavy blows on his defenceless face whenever he had the opportunity. Soon Charles Palethorpe was conquered and ceased to fight, being entirely at the mercy of his enemy.

"Curse you!" he cried, "may you never prosper. Is it not enough that you should have killed my father?"

Herbert made no answer. He breathed heavily, and his teeth were set tightly together. Dragging Charles some yards, he came to a black, cavernous-looking fissure in the ground and cast him into it. The unfortunate young man immediately disappeared with a despairing shriek, and his adversary peered into the black yawning gulf, whose depths were impenetrable.

"That is over," exclaimed Herbert; "I am glad of it. He would not listen to reason, and he has brought his fate upon himself. Now for Ethel."

He strode rapidly away in the direction of Brook Cottage, which he reached in half-an-hour. The mother and daughter were seated in the parlour. Ethel was the picture of misery, and her eyes were red with weeping. Her mother was endeavouring to comfort her, but this was no easy task, for her heart was cruelly torn and lacerated.

No sooner had she schooled herself to forget Herbert as one unworthy of her love, and centred her affections on Charles, than her newly found happiness was dissipated to the winds, and she was once more like a tempest tossed barque on a stormy ocean. Hers was an intensely devotional and affectionate nature. She could not live for herself alone, and it was absolutely necessary for her to have someone to cling to, and to whom she could attach herself. Herbert coolly opened the door and walked in.

"You here, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"How dare you—"

"Pardon my intrusion, ladies," he interrupted. "I have much to say to you. In the

first place, allow me to inform you that Mr. Palethorpe has abandoned all claim to Miss Arbuthnot's hand and heart."

Ethel shuddered perceptibly.

"I cannot believe it," she replied.

"Nevertheless it is precisely as I have the honour to inform you. He has listened to my representation of certain facts, and has consented to leave England for ever. To-night he will sail for Australia."

Ethel uttered a cry of despair, almost amounting to agony, for the abomination of desolation took possession of her heart. Charles gone! What was there left for her to live for now?

"Now for myself," continued Herbert. "You made my acquaintance under a false name. I am really Mr. Gordon. As Mr. Palethorpe was kind enough to put my twin brother out of the way, I take my real name and enjoy the property. Consequently I am able to offer you a position in society, and if you will forget the past, we may be happy in the future."

Ethel made no reply, and thinking this was a good sign, he ventured to take a chair near her. We know the mercenary, worldly nature of Mrs. Arbuthnot, and it can readily be imagined that she thought a great deal more of the rich Mr. Gordon than she did of the penniless Herbert Layton. Now that the mystery was explained, she came to the conclusion that this was a favourable offer, and that Ethel could not do better than accept it.

"My dear child," she exclaimed, "you have heard what Mr. Layton—I mean Gordon has said."

"Yes, mother," replied Ethel, sadly.

"Why not let bygones be bygones and make it up? You are really his wife, and once loved him dearly."

"Once!" she repeated, dreamily.

"Charles Palethorpe could not have thought much of you, or he would not have given you up so easily. Forget him, and go back to your old love."

"His hand is dyed red with the blood of his benefactor and friend," Ethel said.

"He did it for your sake. It was to get money for you," urged her mother.

Herbert took her hand in his, and although she did not attempt to withdraw it, a cold shiver again ran through her.

"Look at me, my darling," he said.

She raised her tear-laden eyes to his, and saw once more the familiar face she had formerly loved so well. Charles was gone from her: the life she led was very lonely. Why should she not forgive the man she had married, and who was truly her husband? In Mrs. Arbuthnot Herbert had found an unexpected friend. The old lady shrewdly went in the direction where the money was, and she knew how valuable the Gordon property was, so as Ethel looked at him, he began to hope that he might win her a second time.

"Can you not forgive me?" he asked. "Think of what I was to you, and how devotedly I am even now attached to you. Do not be cruel, Ethel! Think, darling, of the happiness within your reach."

"Will you swear to me that Charles is gone?" she asked.

"I swear it. You will never see him again," replied Herbert. "He has left you entirely to me, and I will try to redeem my character in your estimation. I am reformed now, and you will never have occasion to blush for me again. Now you know who your husband is."

"I must have time to think," she said. "The shock to-day has unsettled me. Give me time to recover myself."

"May I hope?"

"Yes," she murmured, faintly.

"How long a time do you want to make up your mind, dearest?"

"Let me have one month, Herbert," answered Ethel.

"Very well," he said; "I am confident you will forgive me and take me to your heart once more. I will live in that hope. Life will be indeed a barren waste without you. Yet, if you find after a month's deliberation that you cannot care for me, I will give you your liberty

and never persecute you any more with my attentions."

Mrs. Arbuthnot held up her hands admiringly.

"That is generous," she exclaimed. "Mr. Gordon places himself and his fortune at your feet, Ethel."

"I know it, mother, and I am grateful to him," Ethel replied.

"One kiss before I go," exclaimed Herbert.

"No," Ethel said, drawing back; "at present I do not recognise your right to kiss me. Wait until the month expires."

"So be it. In thirty days I will present myself here for your answer," replied Herbert. "Mrs. Arbuthnot, I wish you good day. Farewell, my love."

She smiled faintly, and he walked away with an elastic step, as if he was treading upon air.

"She is mine!—mine!—mine!" he repeated, exultantly.

A month would soon pass, and he did not anticipate any resurrection on the part of Charles Palethorpe. That the latter would interfere with his plans was the last thing that occurred to him, and he felt sure that he had a powerful ally in the person of Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Is there no escape?" said Ethel. "Is it my fate to be this man's slave? He exercises such a strange influence over me that I feel I cannot refuse him."

"Why should you, my dear? It is a splendid chance," replied her mother. "He is rich and loves you to distraction."

"More than one man has done that, mamma."

"I know it, and it only shows the power of your beauty. Take my advice, accept him. Settle down and live happily."

"How? By marrying—that is, by living with Herbert, for we are already married?"

"Yes. Sacrifice yourself for me, dearest," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, selfishly, "and you will find contentment in the long run."

"Wait," exclaimed Ethel. "Thank heaven, I have a month to decide."

She seemed to derive some comfort from the time that had to elapse before Herbert Gordon would come to claim his response. Something might happen in that time. What, she could not exactly say, yet she had a wild sort of hope that she might escape being the companion of a man she knew to be bold and bad, and whom her instincts told her to distrust.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE MINE.

GRONAN: "Speak! What are you?"
ETHEL: "Gracious woman, hear me. I am a stranger, and in that I answer all your demands." OLD FATHER.

WHEN Charles Palethorpe felt himself hurled into the abyss he gave himself up for lost. Down, down, ever down he went to the Tartarean gloom, breathing the mephitic vapours of the deserted mine.

Fortunately for him, the shaft into which Herbert had cast him communicated with one of the upper galleries in the workings, and he had not far to fall; moreover, there was at the bottom a heap of fodder which had been thrown there for the use of the mules employed in the mine.

It was partially decayed, but being soft, it broke his fall, and when he had recovered from the shock he found that he had no bones broken, though he was seriously bruised and much shaken. All was pitch dark excepting the gleam of light which came from the top of the shaft.

What an awful position he was in, however, for the galleries of the mine extended for miles, and as far as he knew, there was no exit. Rising to his feet, he was conscious of a severe pain in his left foot. He had sprained his ankle, and the suffering it caused him increased every moment.

At first he was inclined to thank Heaven that

his neck had not been broken in his fall, and that he had escaped with his life; but when he came to reflect over his position he was not sure that he ought to congratulate himself. Suppose he was doomed to perish by slow starvation, undergoing the pangs of hunger and of thirst. Would it not be better to die at first?

Nerving himself for an effort, he strove to climb up the rugged sides of the cliff, but soon abandoned the attempt as useless, for he got up a few yards then slipped down, and his hands were already torn and bleeding. Raising his voice he called loudly for assistance.

A mocking echo, hollow and sepulchral, alone answered him. He made himself hoarse to no purpose, and at length he realised all the horrors of his position. To stay where he was would be useless. His strength would soon be exhausted, and all he could do would be to lie down and die, perishing miserably for want of the bare necessities of life.

It would be better to penetrate the gallery, brave the dangers ahead of him, and try if he could not find some exit from his fearful imprisonment. Resisting the inclination to abandon himself to despair, he summoned all his courage to his aid, and plunged into the grave-like blackness of the cutting, extending his hands so as to feel his way, and walking slowly over the uneven surface of the ground.

At times he stumbled and fell, at others he sank knee deep in pools of stagnant water, and his excited imagination made him fancy that he touched slimy reptiles and heard the deadly hiss of the hidden snake. All this time the pain of his sprained ankle was increasing in intensity, and his mind was racked with thoughts of his lost Ethel, who was now in the power of a hated rival.

Distempered in mind and injured in body he was haunted with a fear that he would never get out of the mine, which he began to regard as his tomb. At last, weary and exhausted, he sank down, the chill air penetrating to the marrow of his bones.

He could go no further. Soon he was burning with fever, and he gave himself up to supernatural terrors, fancying the mine was peopled with ghosts. He fancied that spirits, and evil spirits, flitted about him, bearing lanterns, will-o'-the-whisks danced before him, and fiendish laughter rang in his ears.

So great did his terror become that he shrieked aloud and felt as if he should become a gibbering maniac if he did not get into the pure air of day once more. Again he started on his way, but with no better result, the galleries appeared to be interminable, and not one ray of light came to cheer him.

For hours he pushed on, sometimes, as it seemed to him, descending into the depths of the mine, at others ascending, and then it went on all that day and all through the night, though it was all night to him, and he could keep no account of the flight of time.

Hunger and thirst assailed him; his lips were parched and swollen, and his blackened tongue protruded from his mouth, but he was able to find some water in a puddle, and he drank of it, though it tasted of coal tar, and was bitter as the waters of Marah.

The gnawing pangs of hunger were not so easily satisfied, and he suffered terribly, becoming weak and ill. Though he knew it not, his hair turned perfectly white in twenty-four hours, and he looked like an aged and feeble invalid.

Two days passed, and he cursed the hour he was born. On the third day his mind gave way altogether, and the once gay and versatile Charles Palethorpe became hopelessly insane, he sang scraps of songs, talked aloud to Ethel as if she was with him and called her by endearing names. Still walking a little way, then resting, anon crawling like an ape on all fours, he, on the morning of the fourth day, fell down a hole and broke his leg. There he lay groaning and waiting for death.

Perhaps it would have been better for him if it had come; but it was not his fate to die, for a woman bearing a lighted lantern, hearing the groans, came to the spot. She was an elderly

hag and belonged to a tribe of gipsies who had, as the country people truly said, made this home in the secret recesses of the mine. Her name was Madge and she lived with her husband Ezra, her son Tom and her daughter Zoe. They originally came from Bohemia, but had been years in England, travelling all over the country. It was their custom to stay for the winter in the mine, where they could be warm and comfortable. In the spring and summer they sought fresh fields and pastures new.

They supported themselves by selling articles of tinware and telling fortunes. Occasionally the farmers and country people lost a fat hen or a plump turkey, but as the gipsies were not seen to take them, no punishment followed, though it was shrewdly suspected that they found their way into the pot of the gitanos. Seeing the emaciated form of Charles Palethorpe, Madge ran to the spot where the people were encamped and gave the alarm.

The place was at the bottom of a shaft, up which the gitanos had carefully cut a flight of steps, so that they could go up and down at pleasure, two ropes on each side serving them as bannisters, by means of which they could steady themselves.

"Ezra, Tom, Zoe!" she cried. "Come! Some poor creature is lost in the mine and I fear he is dying."

The gipsies, who were sitting round a fire, peered through the smoke and thought that she must be joking.

"Come, I say!" repeated Madge. "He may have money in his pocket."

They hastened to the spot where Charles was lying, and Ezra, who was a tall, swarthy specimen of the true Zingari race, covered with hair as to his face, with dark piercing eyes, took him up in his arms and bore him to the fire. Two paraffin lamps shed a ghastly glare upon the scene, which was weird and picturesque enough for the pencil of Salvator Rosa or even Doré.

"Poor old man," exclaimed Zoe, a pretty brunette of twenty.

It was no wonder she was deceived as to his age, for as we have said his hair had turned white and his face was pinched and shrivelled with hunger and pain. Ezra examined him, and having some rude knowledge of surgery, saw that his leg was broken and hastened to set it. This done, he ordered some soup to be poured down his throat, and he was placed on a bed of straw and dry grass.

"No doubt," he said, "he has fallen into the mine through one of the numerous shafts and been walking about for days."

He searched his pockets, finding only a few sovereigns and a portrait of Ethel Arbuthnot.

"Ha! a pretty face, as I live," said the gipsy, holding it up to the light.

Madge snatched the photograph from his hand, and Zoe, with feminine curiosity, looked over her shoulder.

"It is pretty, but very sad in its expression, mother?" she remarked.

"Bah! throw it in the fire!" said Ezra, contemptuously. "What use is it to us? We will do what we can for him, for the sake of the gold I found on him, but the picture may burn."

"No," exclaimed Madge. "Perhaps the man has friends who will pay us well for all our care and trouble."

"Where are they?"

"This photograph will help us to find them."

The gipsy looked admiringly at his wife, for an idea had struck her which had never occurred to him.

"Bravo!" he cried. "Your mother has the best head after all. Caramba! why did I not think of that?"

Tom had been looking at the picture and with considerable attention.

"I have seen that face?" he said.

"When and where," asked his mother.

"That is what I am trying to think," he replied. "It was during one of my walks. I sold her something. She lives, I think, in a small house that stands by a brook. That is all I can remember."



[A DESPAIRING PLEDGE.]

"I will carry it about with me," exclaimed Madge. "And depend upon it, I will find her."

For days Charles Palethorpe hovered between life and death, but the care which was bestowed upon him by the gipsies into whose hands he had fallen caused the balance to swerve in his favour and the King of Terrors kicked the beam. He gradually got better and stronger, yet he could not move, owing to his broken leg, and he was as helpless as a child.

There was no improvement in his mind. His intellect seemed completely gone, and he did not remember anything that had happened to him. At times he would start up in a fright and scream loudly. At others he would softly murmur the name of Ethel.

Zoe's hand he frequently seized when she was waiting upon him, and would convey it to his lips, kissing it tenderly.

"Ethel, my darling, Ethel my beloved," he would say, and his pale face would be lighted up with a smile.

A fortnight glided by. Madge had made several excursions in the neighbourhood, but she had not as yet succeeded in finding the original of the photograph. One day, however, she came to the cottage by the brook and started to see Ethel sitting in the porch. The likeness was unmistakable, and she felt that she had at last come in the right track.

"Lady?" she exclaimed, "cross my hand with a piece of silver, and I will tell you your fortune."

Ethel raised her sad, pensive face.

"Thank you, good woman," she replied. "I do not believe in such nonsense, and indeed I think I can tell my own fortune well enough."

"Give the poor gipsy something."

Ethel handed her a shilling.

"It is all I can afford," she said. "I am not rich."

"It is enough," replied Madge. "Hold out your hand."

Against her common sense and inclination

Ethel did so, and taking it in hers, the gipsy scrutinised the lines.

"You are in love," she exclaimed. "Yes, lady, you cherish a hopeless passion."

Ethel started.

"How know you that?" she asked.

"It is all here in your hand, and it is given to the Zingari of the East to read the lines. Palmistry with us is a gift as well as a science."

"Go on," replied Ethel nervously, anxious to hear more.

"Your name is Ethel and you have lost your love," continued Madge. "Your heart tells you that you will not see him again, yet I bid you hope."

"Shall I see him again?"

"You will, but he can never again be to you what he was before."

"Why?"

"Because the hand of the Almighty has dealt heavily with him. Oh, lady, your lover has gone mad!"

Ethel was greatly shocked.

"Mad! Oh, no, you are deceiving me. Charles could not have thought so much of me as to allow his reason to be destroyed."

"It is as I say."

"Give me some proof of what you assert, unless you want to make me miserable for ever."

"I can do that, if you will promise to be silent and discreet. In addition to that, I must be well paid and you say you are poor?"

"You shall have money, but for heaven's sake do not trifle with my feelings. I love that man. If he has become insane, through his passion for me, I shall never know what peace is again," cried Ethel.

"I will come here again, lady," said the gipsy, "and you shall see him."

"See him!" Ethel repeated. "Has he not gone abroad. Oh! there is some terrible mystery in your words."

The gipsy raised her white delicate hand to her lips and kissed it.

"Poor child," she exclaimed, kindly. "You are going to suffer and your good face shows you do not deserve it."

"Oh! let me see him," said Ethel, earnestly. "If he is ill, I can nurse him; tell me, I implore you, has he sent you here?"

The gipsy drew the photograph from her pocket.

"Do you know this?" she asked.

Ethel uttered a scream.

"Know it," she said, "it was I who gave it him, the day we were to be married. I see, he has sent you. It was only a joke when you said Charles was mad. He is hiding somewhere. Is it not so?"

Madge shook her head sadly.

"I have spoken the truth?" she answered.

Ethel's countenance fell, for her heart told her she was in the presence of a fresh danger and one that she knew not how to face. At this juncture Mrs. Arbutnot came out, and seeing the gipsy coupled with her daughter's agitation frowned.

"What has this woman been saying to you, my dear?" she asked.

"Nothing, mamma?" Ethel replied, evasively.

"Do not believe a word those fortune-tellers say. They only tell you falsehoods. Come in, your eyes are wet with tears, though that is nothing lately, for you are always crying now."

"I will follow you?" said Ethel.

She went up to the gipsy and whispered in her ear.

"I must see you again and hear more?" she exclaimed.

"When you choose," answered Madge.

"Be here to-morrow at the same hour. I will have money for you."

"It is well," Madge said, and turning on her heel, she retraced her steps to the old mine.

Ethel followed Mrs. Arbutnot into the house, and there was a heavier weight on her heart than ever.

(To be Continued.)



[A DYING DECLARATION.]

UNDER A LOVE CHARM;

OR,

A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who**Married Them?" &c., &c.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FOUL DEED.

There is a stain upon this hand
Which all the wide seas
Could not wash away.
Is there a curse upon this land?
Speak, stranger, say. OLD BALLAD.

LYING under the old beech, whose bare boughs rattled in the wind, stretched in the helpless attitude of the dead, was somebody. Who? Eva's "heart was prophet to her heart." She guessed by some marvellous intuition that it was her father's favourite nephew and heir that had become so cold and dumb and powerless to lift finger or eyelid.

Dead! Great heaven! No—yes—no—yes. Was this some hideous play she was playing? Some fearsome imitation of an innocent child's game of robbers in the wood? Yes—no—yes. She took much pride, this young lady, in being considered a strong-minded woman. She had attended the sick beds of the dying poor, she had stood without flinching by the side of the dead.

Was she not the doctress and the manageress of the village? But then, whenever she had thus stood by the side of the dead they had been calm, and had lain with closed eyes sleeping their last sleep. The angel of death had come to them quietly, solemnly as a messenger

sent from Heaven; friends had been grouped around their beds; the offices of the Church had been administered to the parting soul.

There had been nothing to disturb the feeling of awe and reverence and holy charity with all men that in general pervades a house where the inevitable summons has arrived; but now this pale, ghastly face had a look of surprised horror.

The eyes were wide open, and the lips were parted in a ghastly, unnatural smile. It was the face of Horace Rodney, her own first cousin. Blood welled from a wound in the head. Horace had been foully, cruelly murdered! Ah! and who was this kneeling on the ground in an attitude of despair?

Eva had not noticed him at first; but now a ray from the wintry moon fell on the pale, agonised face of Athelstane Rodney, the man Eva loved, the twin brother of the murdered man, between whom and himself there had been such such ill-feeling of late.

"Athelstane!" cried Eva, in a weak, shrill and unnatural voice, and she laid her hand on her cousin, "who did this deed of blood?"

"I am mad. I know not. Oh, Eva, and only two hours ago I—I hated him so, my brother, my poor beautiful twin brother. Now, Heaven is my witness, I would give my own life to bring him back."

"Who did it?" said Eva, giving the shoulder of Athelstane, which she still clutched, a shake. "You have not been quarrelling, have you? Speak!"

It seemed as if Athelstane could not comprehend the dark and sinister meaning of Miss Rodney's words.

"I don't understand," he gasped. "I shall go mad. I think it is the suddenness of this. If I knew who the wretch was—"

"Athelstane, tell me all you know. Quick—quick! It is a good thing I am with you here; I will not tell how I saw you pass the window half an hour ago, pale and distracted, and with wild eyes; you never saw me. Oh! Athy—Athy, speak. Tell me all."

"I know nothing; I can tell nothing, only I was crossing the park when I heard a dog howl and whine, and looking up saw poor Snap, the favourite hound of my poor brother. Snap leaped on me, and I found his paws were wet with blood. I had had horrid thoughts about Margaret Bainston. I have feared in my heart a fate like that—and he pointed towards Horace—for her, and then when Snap leaped on me a second time and howled and then ran in this direction I followed him, expecting to find something awful; that was when you saw me pass the window. I came on here and I found my brother lying there dead. I think I swooned. When I came to myself I scrambled to my knees and prayed—I have felt so wicked of late."

"I see. I suspect this foul deed is the act of the Bainstons," cried Eva. "That girl Margaret, whom you thought would be murdered, is herself the murderess—she or her father. I have heard her vow that she would be avenged on your brother when she heard that he was engaged to the lady whose policy it was to provide for her and send her out of the way. She must have become maddened with jealousy, and it would not surprise me to hear that she crept behind Horace and dealt him that most fatal blow. How true it is that our sins will find us out."

"Don't, Eva, don't moralise nor preach. I am better now. Let us think—let us examine him. Have you the nerve?"

"I do not know," Eva answered. "I thought I was brave, but the sight of murder is too much. No, I cannot look on him. What shall I do?"

"Go to the house and tell Doctor Finucan, and bring him here with some of the servants—the men of course. I will stop here and keep watch over my murdered brother."

At that moment Eva and Athelstane both heard distinctly the sound of a fiendish and mocking laugh among the trees of the thicket to the left, and then the noise of hastily retreating feet.

"It is a woman's voice," cried Eva; "it is Margaret Bainston! Who is at the bottom of this foul deed? Even if she has not struck the blow it must be her father. She may have had a lover who was jealous of Horace—indeed, I think I have heard some story of the bailiff's eldest son at the farm of Owen's Croft being desperately in love with that shameless Margaret two years ago when she came here to visit her parents, and she scorned his Yorkshire accent and rough manners, and he swore to be avenged. Yes, yes, I am sure the Bainstons are guilty; they shall all be arrested, and I hope hanged as high as Haman."

Athelstane had all this while been kneeling by the prostrate form of his twin brother. He turned round now and cried out:

"His heart stirs. Oh, thank heaven he is not dead! And we have lost time in talking. Run to the house; tell them to bring a stretcher, a bed—brandy. Bring the men-servants and Doctor Finnean, but don't frighten my uncle or the ladies."

As Eva ran off towards the house her lip curled with bitter anger and contempt.

"The ladies," she said to herself, "and he thinks of the nerves of that French doll Clemence Melrose before all other things. I may kneel by the side of a bleeding, dying man; I may be the nurse of a ghastly patient to his last gasp; I may witness a foul and fearful murder, and it means nothing, positively nothing, but the French doll must not suppose that her handsome playmate lies a shattered wreck, grey and livid, with the shadows of approaching death. For my part I will have no respect whatever for her feelings. I doubt me if the French doll has any real genuine womanly feelings that could be stirred by hearing of the death of anyone; the doll is as heartless as the great waxen favourite of my childhood, which I loved when I was eight years old with so passionate a devotion, and at last when I was ten flung into the fire in a rage because it could not return my caresses. Is it to be always my fate to give my love like gold, and to receive in exchange light straws of worthless compliment, or a few, dull, heavy, common stones weighted with cold respect and esteem."

Strange thoughts these to fill the mind of a good young lady flying from a scene of horror to seek help for the dying; but love is a veritable tyrant when it usurps away in the heart of a woman of Miss Rodney's temperament. It makes such a woman sometimes selfish and blind to all interests save one.

Eva rushed into the house, and the first person she met in the wide, lighted hall was that beautiful Clemence Melrose, who had won away from her the heart of Athelstane Rodney, which she despised in her turn, the lovely, fearless lady, the daring rider, the gay, enchanting creature famed for winning men's love at will and playing with their hearts and trampling on them, the clever girl who could quote the first authors at will, the charitable, generous lady whom the poor and her own servants adored.

Was there ever anything so unjust as calling this spirited, intellectual creature a French doll? But nevertheless, it was the name which Eva delighted to give her rival, it so well expressed the spite and wrath of her own suffering heart.

Clemence was attired, not for the ball, but for the dinner which was to be two hours earlier than usual that evening at Wolvermoor. She wore a rich black velvet princess robe fastened with real garnet buttons. On the shoulders were knots of scarlet satin ribbon; a white lace fichu was cast over her shoulders and fastened with a knot of the same scarlet ribbon. An exquisite scarlet camelia was secured by a small golden brooch to her breast; her long train swept behind this peerless queen of beauty. She advanced with a smile, and stood under the lamp now lighted in the great hall.

Eva looked up at the delicate face with its red young mouth and luminous dark eyes, and she anathematised it in her heart, for a new and terrible thought had arisen like a hideous phantom to mock her—a thought almost too

frightful to be put into words. It was this question which some spirit of evil whispered into Eva's ear:

"Has Athelstane Rodney lost his soul for the sake of this woman's fatal beauty? Has he slain his own twin brother through jealousy?"

Do what she would this cruel question still seemed hissed into Eva's ears, and she felt that she could have struck the French doll to the earth. Clemence looked with her sweetest smile on the dark, brown, agitated face of Miss Rodney.

"Been for a lonely stroll in the park this bitterly cold night? You have courage."

Did she read no tale of unspoken horror in those dilating eyes of Eva's. For a moment Miss Rodney could not speak, then she said:

"Your lover, Horace Rodney, has been murdered in the park by the beech tree by some woman whom he has wronged. This is no night for you to flaunt your yellow hair and black eyes and white neck in the sight of admiring crowds. You can scarcely sing or dance while my father weeps for his heir, and all the household goes mourning. Who will you fascinate to-night, now that your promised bridegroom lies stark and stiff in his gore in the wood hard by? You have had so many adorers, and you think so little of men's lives by all accounts, that I suppose this will scarcely affect you more than a child is affected when it breaks its doll; it soon gets another, and so will you!"

"Another doll?" Clemence Melrose spoke in the calmest, softest tones. Was she perfectly cruel and heartless woman or an angel who wore the disguise of a fascinating woman of the world? "I don't play with dolls," she continued, simply, "I am too old now," and without another word Miss Melrose passed into the library on the other side of the hall and softly closed the door behind her.

"She is a fiend, a heartless wretch, a French doll," cried Eva, aloud, and she stamped her feet in her wrath.

Under any other circumstances Miss Rodney would not have lost her character as a strong-minded young woman, steadfast, calm and self-possessed in the hour of danger, but now her heart was torn by love and cruel jealousy; her love for Athelstane was of that strong absorbing kind which makes all things under the sun subordinate to itself.

If all the household of Wolvermoor, the parents and sister of Eva, their guests and servants had been massacred by a gang of burglars, and had Athelstane been spared, and had he asked Eva to be his wife, she would, in spite of the horror of her surroundings, have been filled in the depths of her secret heart with a wild, tumultuous joy—nay, had the sun been darkened, and the whole world cast into eternal shadow, and had Athelstane given Eva his heart, she felt that she would have walked as in the light of Paradise.

Such love is idolatry, and brings its own punishment. Eva was conscious of this—conscious of the selfishness of this love of hers, conscious that her attack on Miss Melrose, a guest in her father's house, had been unlady-like—nay, unwomanly; but she told herself that this love was stronger than she was, and that after all Clemence was a hateful French doll.

Meanwhile, she went about the house wildly searching for Doctor Finnean. She found him at length, she was guided to him by his voice; he with Lord Melrose and Sir Robert were in a small room on the landing, furnished in pale-green damask and called thence the Green-room. It contained an old cabinet of curiosities. Sir Robert had a weakness for old gold and silver coins, and enamelled snuff-boxes that had belonged to grand beauties of the Courts of France and England in the olden times.

He was listening to Doctor Finnean's opinion of a certain portrait on the enamelled lid of an ancient gold box that had once belonged to Marie Antoinette. Eva rushed into the room and laid her hand on the doctor's arm.

"Come quickly," she cried. "Somebody has been fearfully hurt by ruinous hands."

The doctor received the news quietly, while

Lord Melrose uttered an exclamation of horror, and Sir Robert, whose nerves were weak, sank into a chair.

"Who is hurt?" asked the doctor, calmly. "My cousin. I do not think he will live. He has been murderously attacked."

Sir Robert, off his guard, exclaimed: "Which cousin? Not poor Horace?"

"Yes, Horace, father."

"Then that jealous scoundrel Athelstane is at the bottom of it," cried Sir Robert. "He said the other day that he would rather take his brother's life than see him the husband of Miss Melrose."

"Father," cried Eva, "how wicked—how unjust! It must be some of the Bainstons; everyone knows about them except you. Come, Doctor Finnean, I don't think he is dead yet, and you may save him. He is lying out in the park near that beech tree we call the 'Witches' Arbour!'"

"Bring several men to carry him," said the doctor, who had not once lost the professional calmness of his manner. "We must bring him into the house without delay, and it may be necessary to send to Pennington or Marston—whichever is the nearest—for another medical man. I cannot undertake the responsibility of a case like this alone."

"Oh, my poor dad!" groaned Sir Robert. "I have my suspicions, and they are of the blackest kind. Oh, this will kill me!" and the doctor broke into helpless, unmanly weeping.

Many hours have passed away. The house of Rodney is silent, but lights burn in most of the guest chambers. Naturally all the lady visitors were terribly alarmed at the awful occurrence. They have heard of the strange attack made on Athelstane some week or two ago, when he was drugged and his watch and chain were stolen, and they tell one another that "it is these bad times and so many men out of work that really life and property are not safe in country houses."

The strange thing was, however, that Horace Rodney had not been robbed. His watch, chain, and purse, containing ten pounds in gold, were found safe in his pocket. As for the injuries he had received, they were of a fearful if not of a fatal character.

Two doctors from Pennington had arrived, and a celebrated local surgeon, Sir Allan Higgins, had been telegraphed for from York, but could not be expected to arrive until noon of the next day. The three doctors present had made an examination of the hapless youth stricken down in the midst of health and hope and happiness, and they all came to one horrible and most appalling conclusion—Horace might live, but his head was so terribly injured, evidently by violent blows from some sharp instrument, that he could not be expected under any circumstances ever again to be possessed of his mental faculties; he might live, but it would be as a wretched idiot.

"It is worse than death."

It was Athelstane who spoke those words, who, with Doctor Finnean and a homely old villager called Nurse Brett, kept watch over his unfortunate brother, while Eva Rodney declared that she would not leave the bedside of her cousin until his life was no longer in danger.

They had carried Horace into a large chamber near the staircase on the first landing. A large fire burnt in the wide grate. Every necessary and comfort was brought into this room; called the Amber room, because its hangings were of amber damask, and here the watchers stood around the fire or sat in the low, soft-cushioned chairs. Horace lay white and ghastly, with staring, filmy eyes and an unnatural distortion half like a scornful smile on his perfectly curved mouth. His breathing was heavy and loud. Already the young, handsome face was terribly changed.

It is almost needless to say that when the carriages, filled with guests, had arrived at Wolvermoor on that night they had been told of the attack made on the baronet's heir, and had all immediately driven away. No ball, no

play, no grand supper on that sad winter's night at Wolvermoor. It seemed as if the elements joined the sounds of wailing and sobbing to the bitter weeping of those who dwelt in the grand old house, for a great storm arose, and the winds made wild clamour about Wolvermoor.

"It is worse than death," repeated Athelstane.

Eva had been sitting for some time in silence looking into the red heart of the glowing fire, the old nurse nodded in her chair, Doctor Finucan had walked into an adjoining dressing-room to wash his face and hands in cold water in order to keep himself awake, Eva and Athelstane were virtually alone.

"Athy," said Eva, "I am going to speak to you as if I were your sister or your wife."

CHAPTER XIX.

WHO DID IT?

Oh, memory sees things as they were,
And not as they were misenjoyed,
And still would be if aught destroyed
The glory of their hopelessness.

"SPEAK ON," said Athelstane, wearily. "It seems to me now that I have nothing left to live for, my whole soul is overwhelmed with remorse. Lately, I fancied that I hated my twin brother, now it seems to me that he was part of myself. I would give my life to see him well and sound in body and mind as he was this time last night, I care more for that young wreck on yonder bed than for any mortal under the sun."

"No, no, you forget your Clemence, whom I call the French doll; she is surely more to you than a dozen brothers?"

"I thought she was till to-night, Eva, now I see things differently. I have spoken to Miss Melrose about an hour ago, met her in the passage and told her what the doctors said, that Horace if he lived would be an idiot for life. I did not ever believe in her love for him, but I thought she believed he loved her, and I was not prepared for the heartless words she spoke; but, oh, I am disenchanted."

"Thank Heaven," said Eva, under her breath, then aloud, "Then, what did she say, Athy?"

"She said—oh, don't ask me, it is too cruel to repeat. I know she laughed—actually laughed—and said that now poor Margaret Bainston was avenged, and that Horace would make a good-looking idiot, she should think. She spoke of you also in a way that enraged me; she actually seemed inclined to treat this mysterious, murderous, hideous affair as a joke."

"The French doll has her mocking moods," said Eva, bitterly. "I have heard her say that if a ridiculous idea struck her she should be bound to laugh even in a death chamber, and I suppose she finds something amusing in the murder of Horace."

"Upon my life it struck me so," said Athelstane, passionately. "Anyhow, she has now cured me at once and for ever of the insane passion with which she inspired me; I am no longer Under a Love Charm."

The dark eyes of Athelstane were fixed upon the fire with a wild, sad, dreamy gaze. Do we mortals ever misjudge one another? Not only those towards whom we are indifferent, or those whom we do not like, but even those who love us the best, and whom we love? Those who are nearest and dearest to us; are they not oftentimes misunderstood? Eva knew this well; she would rather have died than have wronged Athelstane Rodney, and yet she asked herself how it was that the hideous shadow of a black suspicion would envelope her beloved cousin in its ugly gloom.

Murder, had there been murder? Not premeditated, not planned, no, a thousand times no, but had those brothers met in that lonely glade of Wolvermoor Park, and had Horace taunted and mocked Athelstane? Had Athelstane, mad with love for the yellow-haired, black-eyed "French doll," struck out in his blind rage at the handsome, mocking, haughty head of Horace, and had Horace returned the blow, himself weak, giddy and stunned? because the hands of the young man were clenched when he

was discovered, and, strangest of all, there was found between his teeth—let not this detail shock too sensitive or fastidious readers—a bit of human flesh about the size of a threepenny bit; this he must have bitten from the hand of his assailant.

Athelstane wore on the first finger of his left hand a patch of black sticking-plaster. Now he was truly overwhelmed with remorse; now he seemed almost to loath the girl for whose sake he had perhaps committed this foul crime.

Athelstane, the noble, the generous, the true, the single-hearted. Athelstane, pure and stainless hitherto, as some brave knight of olden times, who conquered all evil things by the sheer force of his noble purity of life and holy courage.

Was it possible that in one mad moment, stung by slighted love and the cruel mockeries of his rival he had become a murderer? Great heaven! a second Cain, with the stain of his twin brother's blood upon his hands, upon his brow, upon his soul, through all the countless ages of eternity?

"If it be so he needs a friend, a comforter," said the loving Eva to herself. "His soul is so burdened with remorse that he feels perhaps as if all men hated him and would flee from him. I will show him that I am faithful in adversity, that I love him, guilt-stained though he may be, with a love that passes the understandings of commonplace mortals. Yes, if he were arrested and tried and convicted of the murder of his brother, if a jury pronounced him guilty and a judge passed upon him the grim sentence of death; if he were a fettered convict in a condemned cell, I would kneel by his side on the cold stones till the last; I would mount with him the steps of the scaffold, and when he died his ignominious death I too would die. I would swallow poison, and they should raise me up a corpse."

Poor Miss Rodney. What would the rector of the village of Homondwood and the rector's wife, who regarded Sir Robert's daughter as an exemplary saint, a teacher of the poor, an excellent young lady, who seemed to spend her life in setting good example to all around her—what would they have said if they could have read the rebellious heart and wild, impious thoughts of the love-smitten girl?

Alas! what frail, weak creatures the best of us are in times of fierce trial and fiery temptation. While we strive to lead lives that shall be pleasing to our bountiful Father and useful to those around us, let us still judge gently, pitifully, of those who fall into sin; let us pray for them, help them, not join in the hue and cry that the world raises against them.

Eva watched her cousin, and while she condemned him in her heart as a murderer, she yet felt that she would rather die than that the shadow of suspicion should hang over him from others even for an hour.

"I will speak to him when I have an opportunity," she said to herself. "I will tell him that I love him more than ever. Why should I be haunted by this hideous suspicion, that my noble Athy is the murderer? Why should it not be Margaret Bainston? Did we not hear her laugh in the coppiece? Well, if it were not her she saw it and was a witness, and her vengeful heart rejoiced, for I heard her laugh. I wonder if it would be wise to tell that or not?"

Thus far had Eva proceeded in her cogitations when Doctor Finucan walked out of the inner room, having washed his hands, and now he was engaged in replacing his large diamond ring on the white strong forefinger of his left hand.

Eva glanced up at him moodily. There was certainly something about this tall, grave, red-haired, quiet man, with his one eye, cynical smile and intellectual, yet often scowling brow which inspired a strong mistrust on a first introduction. There was a certain stealthy, mocking leer in that one eye which filled imaginative and sensitive persons with a species of fear and dislike impossible to account for.

Perhaps the reader may remember how frightened of him Leontine Melrose had felt when she met him first at Doctor Thorne's on

the night when Miss Germain, the beloved lady-companion of Lady Melrose, had been so cruelly stabbed to death by a certain Frenchman, who had escaped and had never been heard of again.

Then when Athelstane met this doctor first at the railway station at Penalt what a violent dislike he felt for him. Eva had always said that he reminded her of a murderous spy of some secret society, some assassin in disguise; but as time went on these childish suspicions wore away; the doctor was so calm, so gentle, so sensible, so obliging to ladies, so agreeable to men. He had been at Wolvermoor three weeks and everybody now sung his praises.

"I believe I only disliked his having one eye," Athelstane had on one occasion said to Eva; and he had added, "I think him a good sort of fellow now."

But when the doctor came in from the dressing-room pushing with some little difficulty the great diamond ring on to his damp finger, Eva was struck as if for the first time by the stealthy look in his one eye as it rested on the dark, bent head of poor Athelstane. The amber chamber was oak panelled, and the furniture dated back two centuries. It was of priceless carved oak, lately upholstered anew in amber damask.

A few faded family portraits of dead and gone Rodneys, male and female, were hung here and there; the bed was a ghostly four poster, in which Queen Elizabeth might have slept. Altogether the room had naturally a weird and ghostly aspect, and it seemed to Eva that the doctor formed a fitting adjunct to the picture. He seemed like a midnight assassin paid to put some sleeping, unconscious victim out of the way, and yet for all the stealthiness and strange, sleepless watchfulness of his demeanour, where could a more eminently respectable looking personage have been found than the Doctor Finucan?

His dress was of the best materials; he wore always a complete suit of the glossiest black, and no jewellery save that huge costly diamond upon his forefinger. Still Eva said to herself, "There is a gloomy secret about this man. What is it?"

The doctor came and sat down without any ceremony between the two young people, and glanced anxiously from one to the other.

"Is there not a young woman called Margaret Bainston?" he said in his soft, deep, professional voice, "who has some claim on poor Horace Rodney?"

"Yes," said Eva, speaking in excitement through clenched teeth, and laying an eager hand on the doctor's arm.

She was delighted at suspicion pointing anywhere save towards her idol cousin, whom yet in her heart of hearts she believed to be guilty.

"I know the girl; she is a vengeful, violent girl; she was close to us in the thicket this evening just as we had found Horace. I am sure of it, I heard her laugh."

"It is a fact worth recording," said the doctor. "If the patient died to-night, I think we have grounds for taking out a warrant to arrest Margaret Bainston on a charge of complicity in the murder!"

"Even if he lives," said Athelstane, slowly, raising his head and looking at the fire, "it is still murder!"

"In that case Miss Bainston will most likely have penal servitude for life," said the doctor.

"She could not have done it herself," said Athelstane; and he added: "Who spoke of a lover, a bailiff's man, down at Owen's Croft?"

"A man called Wilkins," cried Eva, eagerly; "a low-browed, dark-skinned, gipsy-like man. I have seen him in Bainston's cottage two years ago waiting to take Margaret for a walk, and she would not go with him after all, and he swore at her in my presence. Oh, yes, I quite remember that."

"And I have heard," said the doctor, slowly and calmly, rubbing his large white hands together as he spoke, "that this fellow swore he would spill the blood of Horace Rodney—swore it a week since in an inn called the 'Stirrup Cup' at Pennington Common."

"I will have him arrested!" cried Athelstane, starting eagerly to his feet.

"Stop!" said the doctor.

His voice sounded like the toll for the dead when he said "Stop!" It had a deep, booming, metallic ring. He lifted his great white hand, fixed his one penetrating eye on Athelstane, and added:

"We have no distinct proofs; we must collect them. I am only now repeating something that Parker, Sir Robert's valet, told me. We must find out who has done this deed. Certainly reason points towards the Bainstons. You, Miss Rodney, are quite sure about that laugh?"

"Quite sure and certain—quite, quite positive," cried Eva.

Athelstane heard it also.

"I heard a something," said Athelstane; "it seemed like a demon's laugh."

"My dear fellow," said the doctor, with a contemptuous little smile, "talk common sense. Pray what experience have you of the laughter of fiends? A narrow one, I trust."

"It is impossible to think or speak common sense," said Athelstane; "the horror of this is driving me insane."

"You must have some wine," said the doctor, quietly—"some good wine to strengthen your nerves. Ah, what is that?"

It was a sound in the next room—a frantic voice of a woman raised high in a passion of grief or of wrath. At the same moment the patient on the bed seemed to bound up furiously, and the next instant Horace rose in his bed, sat up, and turned his livid face towards the group at the fire. The curtains were undrawn at the foot, and the terrible face of the young man was thrown into vivid relief by the flamelight of the fire.

"I die! murdered by—"

Doctor Finucan let the poker fall loudly on the fender, and drowned the words of the dying youth.

(To be Continued.)

AN HONEST LEGAL OPINION.

AN honest farmer once called upon a celebrated lawyer and told him he wanted an opinion. He had heard a great deal about the value of Mr. S.—'s opinions, and a great many people went to him to get an opinion; and John, though he never had had, nor was likely to have, a lawsuit or other difficulty for a lawyer to help him from, thought he would have an "opinion" too.

"Well, John, what can I do for you?" said Mr. S., when John, in his turn, was shown into the room.

"Why, lawyer," replied John, "I happened to be in town, and, having nothing to do, I thought I could come and get your opinion."

"State your case, John. What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing. I ain't got no lawsuit, I only want to get one of your opinions; they say they're very valuable."

"But, John—about what?"

"Oh, anything, sir. Take your pick and choose."

The lawyer, seizing the notions of his client on the matter in hand, took a pen, and, writing a few words, folded them up and handed them to John, who carefully placed the paper in his pockets.

"What's to pay, sir?"

"Six and eightpence."

When John returned home the next morning he found his wife, who pretty much took the lead in his business matters, anxiously discussing with his chief farm servant the propriety of getting a large quantity of oats that day, which had been cut the one previous, or of undertaking some other labour.

John was appealed to to settle the question, but he could not decide. At length he said:

"I'll tell you what, Polly, I have been to a lawyer, and got an opinion that cost me six and

eightpence. There it is—read her out; it's a lawyer's writing, and I can't make head nor tail of it!"

John, by the way, could not read the plainest print, but Polly, who was something of a scholar, opened the paper and read as follows: "Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day."

"Enough said!" cried John; "them oats must be got in." And they were "got in;" and the same night such a storm came on as would otherwise have ruined them entirely.

John often afterwards consulted this opinion and acted upon it; and to this day entertains a high estimate of lawyers' opinions generally, and of the lamented Mr. S.—'s in particular.

WOMAN THE PRIMITIVE POTTERY MAKER AND DECORATOR.

Is an interesting article by the late Professor Hartt, the author, after copious extracts from the writings of those who have travelled among the various savage tribes of the globe, shows that among such people generally the art of pottery making is, at first, exclusively practised by women, the reason being that the fabrication of earthenware is primarily and essentially a branch of culinary work—the latter everywhere falling to the lot of the gentler sex. Among savages, man is the hunter, fisher, and warrior, while the woman takes care of the house and the culture of the field. When, however, in the progress of the tribe in culture, the practice of the art of pottery comes to be a trade or profession, and to interfere with the household work, it passes naturally into the hands of man, and it will be found that in every case where men make earthenware, the tribe has advanced considerably beyond the savage state.

But savage woman not only makes the vessels of clay, she also ornaments them, and if the fictile art has originated with her, and has grown up under her hands, it seems no less probable that the ornaments she uses should have originated with her; and the probability is increased by the fact that to her falls the work of spinning and weaving, and of making and decorating personal ornaments and clothes, and of making baskets, &c.

THE TOILET SPONGE.

Few articles of human use are more abused than a sponge, and few things in the cause of cleanliness are allowed to reach such a dirty state. What is more unpleasant than a dirty sponge? It scents a whole room, and the odour is horrible; and how refreshing is its sweet sea-smell when new and kept clean! If you wish to preserve your sponge as a means and implement of cleanliness, you must never allow it to lie wet; to accomplish this, after thoroughly rinsing it, you must not merely squeeze it, but you must wring it as dry as you possibly can. If it is a poor one and tears—well, never mind, you can now so cheaply buy a new one, if you ask for pantry or stable sponges, which are just as good as the better-shaped so-called bath-sponges. Besides, it is better to have a ragged clean one, and buy another which need only cost you eightpence, than use a bunch of decaying, putrefying stuff, which only gives you back the human grease and dirt you have been so careless and slovenly as to leave in it, till it becomes almost corrupt.

Avoid what many people do, putting their wet sponges out of the window to dry. They are rarely dried previously, and there they lie, heavy with wet, exposed to the evaporation of air and sunshine, which both combine to rot them. A common sponge basket is the best receptacle. In the case of washing wounds, you cannot be too extravagant with sponges—the

same piece should never be used twice, however well washed, but always burnt, for the very water is poisoned by the rinsings of the wound, and minute particles of poisonous matter adhere to the tiny passages of the sponge's interior, which cannot always find their way out again, especially in the case of fine Turkeys.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

—OR—

JEW AND GENTILE.

CHAPTER II.

LEVY, the money-lender, sat in the miserable little parlour which by courtesy he called his office, poring over a ledger which seemed to fix his attention with more than ordinary interest. It was late for a person who called himself a "business man" to be thus intent upon his books, for at that hour most well-ordered households were settling themselves for the night, but Levy's business was of that peculiar nature which reversed the ordinary course of trade, for with him traffic was more brisk while other people slept.

Mr. Levy was an elderly man of perhaps sixty-five years, with strongly-marked features, which might possibly in his younger days, before mammon set its seal upon them, have been distinguished as above the ordinary type of his people. He was dressed in a loose, crimson gown, which, with the peculiar cast of features, gave an oriental aspect to his looks—an aspect which a parti-coloured fez with a gold tassel hanging down the back served to heighten.

The room where he sat was in sharp contrast with the man's own appearance, for while his looks suggested a picture of Arabian or Turkish life, the chamber spoke only of ordinary tenement-house discomforts and thriftlessness. The uncarpeted floor, the common, scanty furniture, the uncurtained windows, were scarcely less chilling than the empty grate where the last smouldering embers had long since died out.

Yet, regardless of his surroundings, Levy continued his study of the ledger before him, now and then turning to consult others which lay strewn about the table. The one candle which burned beside him but partially lighted the room—indeed it was scarcely sufficient for the man's purpose, for now and then he was obliged to lift the greasy jappaned candlestick and hold it so that the flickering light would fall more directly upon the page before him.

There was some anxiety depicted upon the Hebrew's face, as he pursued his investigation, and more than once he turned to scrutinise a certain paper which lay between the leaves of the book.

"This young man has got himself into deeper trouble than he thinks," he at last said, in a low, softly modulated voice. "Rich men's sons may go too far as well as poorer ones, and then what is to become of them, I wonder, if their fathers get tired of helping them? It behoves me to think a little about this rash young fellow."

He put down his candle, drew off his spectacles, and leaning back in his chair, remained for some moments in deep meditation. As he sat thus there came to his ear from time to time certain noises from the next room like the rocking of a chair upon the uneven boards of an uncarpeted floor, or the footsteps of a person moving about the room.

At such times the man would turn his head uneasily and glance toward the door leading into the room whence these sounds came, and once when a low and not unmusical voice broke out into a little snatch of song, he frowned and opened his lips as if he would utter an angry reproof, but checking himself he again took up his candle and pored over his books.

This occupation had not been resumed many moments before there came a light tap upon the outer door. Levy arose, and, with the candle still in his hand, proceeded to undo the fastenings, and presently threw the door open to admit a young man who stood upon the threshold.

"Ah, Mr. Aveling," said the money-lender, bowing his visitor in with much emprossement. "Is it not strange that always those of whom we are thinking are close at hand?"

"Not at all strange, Mr. Levy, when your account books bid you expect my coming," returned the young man, with a laugh, which, though meant to be careless, had nevertheless a nervous undertone which did not escape the hearer's notice.

"Ah, sir, but my account books are often false prophets," answered the Hebrew. "Sometimes they bid me expect a visitor with every degree of certainty, but instead of his coming I afterwards hear that he has gone to America or to some other far-away place."

"I wonder that so shrewd a man as you should not look more closely after your visitors' engagements," said the other, languidly, even wearily, dropping into a seat upon the other side of the table from where the chair of the money-lender was placed.

The other shrugged his shoulders, and with his fingers deftly snatched the long top wick from the candle without extinguishing it.

"One can never calculate upon the freaks of people," he said. "Some prefer one thing and some another, but I've noticed that they are all agreed upon one point, and that is to make themselves as comfortable as they can without thinking of how many others they crowd out into the cold."

"I trust you are not cross to-night. Mr. Levy," said the young man fixing a quizzical yet secretly anxious look upon his companion.

"So amiable a wish betokens the want of a favour," replied Levy, with some asperity, for, though ordinarily affable and persuasive, there were times when interest counselled him to be the reverse.

"You are quite right," returned Aveling, coming at once to the object of his visit; "I do want a favour of you, and a large one, too; but, as you very well know, you can make your own terms in granting it."

"Yes, and to receive such security as that, perhaps," retorted the Hebrew, passing across the table the paper he had so often scanned that evening.

The cheek of the young man blanched, but it was more because of the tone of his companion than at sight of the paper. He took it carelessly in his hand and glanced at it.

"It is correct, I think," he said, handing it back to its owner.

The latter, puzzled a little, perhaps, by Aveling's coolness, took the paper and replaced it between the leaves of the ledger whence he had drawn it, yet all the while he kept his keen eye fixed upon his visitor's countenance.

"Mr. Levy," said the latter, again broaching the errand which brought him thither, "I have come for more money. I must have it to-night, and I look for your assistance in getting it."

Levy did not immediately reply, but, turning once again to his books, ran his eye over page after page whereon the name of Edward Aveling already stood for large advances.

"I know you will tell me," the young man hastened to say, as he detected an unfavourable response rising to the money-lender's lips. "You would tell me that I already owe you amounts you would first see cancelled before you make other loans. But why should you fear to trust me?"

The speaker paused, and his cheek flushed with even a deeper dye than that which the wine had caused, as he continued:

"Am I not a rich man's son—his sole heir? Why should you fear to trust me with a sum I need?"

Levy scanned his visitor's face. At his entrance he had noted the flushed face, the wine-laden breath, and the unequal step; but the usurer was accustomed to these peculiarities in

his patrons, and but seldom permitted them to interfere with his transactions.

"Ah, yes," he replied, after a moment's pause. "It is true you are a rich man's son, but rich men have nephews sometimes who are better sons to the fathers than those which nature gave them."

"What is that you say?" cried Aveling, starting to his feet with sudden anger. "Has Mark Upton dared to traduce me here—even here?"

The scornful emphasis upon these last words did not escape the Hebrew's notice; but seeming to pass them by unheeded, he said:

"It is for my interest, is it not, young man, to find out many things for myself? Does any man trust his thousands with another without looking about to see whether he will ever get them back again?"

Aveling bit his lip, and his courage, which the wine had temporarily strengthened, waxed weak as once more the money-lender's words brought him face to face with the ruin which threatened him.

Keen-eyed, well-versed in the straits of men of the world, the Israelite watched his visitor with the vigilance of a mastiff. Time and time again had just such interviews transpired in that dingy little office.

There, where poverty seemed to reign, where discomfort and even want were often felt, came the votaries of false pleasures, came the distressed merchant, came the extravagant lady of fashion and the perplexed foreigner, and there, at the will of this man in oriental garb, distresses and perplexities were lightened, or else those who sought his aid went away more disheartened and despairing than they came.

And such power was loved by the dark-eyed, swarthy Israelite. What was it to him that by day the carriage-wheels of his patrons dashed mud and dust upon him as he waited in the heat and cold for them to pass, when by night those same gay equipages threaded the dark, dingy streets which led to his abode, and their occupants implored him to aid them in maintaining this false glitter and show?

Many a night had he left his wretched abode and visited those aristocratic regions where pride, good breeding, and wealth were supposed to create a charmed, exclusive circle, and there he often glanced through windows and beheld fashion holding its choicest reunions; beheld dazzling figures of youthful loveliness floating through the graceful mazes of the dance unconscious that cut on the cold pavement there stood the real giver of the entertainment—the magician whose gold had helped buy many a jewel in that glittering assembly, and who, did he so will, could, before the day dawned, close the doors of many a mansion which now swung easily open at the approach of suave men and richly-attired women.

Edward Aveling, pressed for time, made impatient by a suspense to which he had never been disciplined, chafed under Levy's delay.

"Come," he at length said, with more vehemence than policy warranted. "Time flies. Am I, or am I not, to be accommodated?"

"You are not," replied the money-lender, shaking his head grimly, and closing his book with a sound which fell upon the young man's ear with all the horror of final doom.

"Stay, Mr. Levy," he said, stretching forth his hand as if to restrain the other from further denial. "Pardon me if I have been too abrupt. Pray remember that when a man is harassed by anxiety he is not apt to choose and pick his words. You must not refuse the loan I ask to-night. Take what interest you please—double, treble what I have been paying. I'll not wrangle about that. Only let me have the money and be off."

"No, no, Mr. Aveling," Levy repeated, shaking his head more decidedly than before. "Business is business. I get my money honestly and I must not part with it too easily."

"Will nothing move you?" cried the young man, rising and pacing the floor. "Why

should you fear to trust John Aveling's only son?"

"Because I have already trusted John Aveling's only son too far! Not without some better security than that paper I showed you a few moments ago will you get another farthing?"

Something in the money-lender's tone made Edward Aveling scan his face more critically, for he thought he detected therein a determination to yield at last, if the right inducement could be found.

At this moment the sound of a singing voice in the next room again became audible, and again the Hebrew frowned impatiently, and made as if he would call aloud to hush it. But the young man, absorbed by his own affairs, heeded neither the voice nor the money-lender's annoyance.

"Is there any security you could name?" he asked, more calmly than when he had last spoken, for with the other's changed tone a ray of hope had dawned upon him.

The singing in the next room continued, and it was now the Israelite who, in undisguised annoyance, arose from his chair and took one or two turns about the floor. Aveling watched him curiously, even wonderingly, for never before had the cold, self-possessed calculating man shown such signs of perturbation.

He went to the curtained window and stood before it for a few seconds, drumming upon the dingy panes with his finger-tips, and looking abstractedly down into the dark, deserted street below. Once or twice when the voice in the adjoining room swelled louder in its tones he shrugged his shoulders and half stamped his feet upon the floor.

Edward Aveling in the meantime watched the man with all the anxiety and suspense of one who waits to hear his fate pronounced. To him the silence, broken only by that singing voice which fell almost unheeded upon his ears, was so oppressive that he could almost hear his very heart beats, while his brain, heated alike by excitement and wine, seemed throbbing with the energy of a trip-hammer.

Unable longer to bear this frightful uncertainty, knowing that precious moments freighted with dishonour, and perhaps with death, were slipping irrevocably away, the young man again broke silence and repeated his former question:

"Is there any security you could name—any inducement I could offer?"

Levy turned sharply around and slowly resumed the chair from which he had so hastily risen.

"Yes," he said, after another lengthy pause. "There is an inducement which might change my decision, but you must accept it without grumbling or delay."

"Name it!" cried Aveling, hastily. "You may count upon my acceptance as already assured. No alternative can be too difficult provided you furnish me with the sum I need."

Levy looked furtively towards the door of the inner room, and lowering his voice said:

"There is a girl in yonder chamber who has been thrown upon my care and support in a manner I do not fancy. No matter who or what she is, there is no need that I should waste the time you say is so precious in telling you. It does not suit me to live with such an incubus upon my hands. Take her away and I shall think myself well rid of her by accommodating you; but it must be at a good rate of interest, mind. Business is business, you know, and accommodation is accommodation. Without the one the other does not follow."

Edward Aveling looked puzzled, but at the same time a flush of disgust passed over his face.

"How?" he said. "What do you wish me to do with this girl? Can you not send her whence she came without saddling some one else with a burden of which you have yourself become tired?"

"You do not understand me, young man, replied the Hebrew, his face in turn now flushing with anger. "It is not the wont of our people to throw our women into temptation or danger. This girl is not the miserable creature you take

her for. What I have told you concerning her is true. She has been thrown upon me for support, yet look about you and say if you think that Levy, the poor Hebrew, can afford to bear such an expense. She has been many years hampering my movements, dinning my ears with her singing, and eating the bread I work so hard to get. But not for any or for all of these reasons would I throw her into the way of any man for him to ill-use her as he might choose. If you take my money you take this girl, and you take her as your wife."

"My wife!"

Edward Aveling sprang angrily to his feet. "Extortioner!" he cried, "you do indeed set a high price upon your so-called accommodation! What do you take me for, to suppose that I, the son of the wealthiest and most honourable man in the city, should bind myself in such a way as you propose? My wife? Levy, you are mad! Your love of money has turned your head!"

The Israelite waited patiently until this outbreak had subsided, and then in cutting tones replied:

"Ah, 'the son of the richest and most honourable man' in this great city speaks very boldly, it seems to me. Is the wife I propose not good enough for the spendthrift gambler? Has he the right to scorn any woman—he who has himself fallen so low? I know your necessities better than you think, Mr. Aveling. I know that to-morrow you may be ruined, disgraced, and it has not been without some thought that I have proposed to you the alternative I have named. But your father's name, as you say, is still honourable, and he would provide for your wife if—"

"My wife!" again repeated the young man. "You reckon without your host, if you fancy that my father would ever receive or acknowledge a wandering, nameless jade thrust upon him at the bidding of a money-loving Jew!"

"Aha! your fancy takes merry flights, Mr. Aveling," said the Israelite, his eyes flashing angrily. "Is a money-loving Jew of less account than a money-wasting Gentile? Has he not the right to dictate terms, when fortune has placed it in his power? Shall he blindly grovel at the feet of those who come begging to him for aid? Shall he debase himself to save them from ruin, and shall he tamely submit to their insults? No, he will not! There are moments in the life of a Jew when he is amply compensated for many an insult, many a jibe, and those moments are when such creatures as you come to him in their extremity and supplicate his assistance. You have heard my terms. It is immaterial to me whether you accept them or not. This girl can be otherwise disposed of, but let me tell you it will be worse for you than if you had never heard and rejected my offer. I will no longer put off your day of reckoning. I have trusted you largely and waited patiently. To-morrow—ay, this very night—I will go to your father's house. I will demand from him the payment of his son's debts, and I will present this little note also," and again the Hebrew drew from between the leaves of the ledger the slip of paper he had before so cautiously examined. "Do you think he will accept this precious bit as anything which his hand has ever touched?" he went on, noting and exulting over the young man's sudden and nerveless sinking into the chair opposite him. "Do you think he will acknowledge this signature as his own? Will he save his son's honour by quietly paying the sums which the 'money-loving Jew' has advanced and so hush the matter up, or will he turn the usurer from his door? No, no; he will not do that, for I shall have officers within call, who will see that the Jew is not assailed as well as insulted. The rich and honourable Mr. Aveling, whose only son—"

"Stop!" cried the young man, driven to desperation by the other's taunts. He dashed his clenched fist against his forehead, upon which the great veins stood out like livid cords. "Give me the paper! You shall never present it to my father. It is not due until to-morrow, and before that time—"

"It is due to-day!" said Levy, pointing to

the clock, which had already reeled off the last moment of one day and began blithely on another. "It is due now, and I were an idiot to delay demanding its payment."

He arose as if he would get his hat and coat and sally forth. Edward Aveling groaned, and let his head fall heavily upon his breast. He had come to this place overwhelmed with threatened dishonour, and lo! a greater one still lay in wait for him.

Idiot, idiot that he had been to rush so blindly on, taking no thought of consequences, as with fatal haste he entangled his feet in the deeper meshes of guilt!

In that supreme moment of agony self-destruction beckoned him with an enticing hand, smiling with the promise of a refuge and an asylum, but a moment later his soul shrank back from that grim alternative, for a dread hereafter loomed frowningly before him.

Levy, standing opposite, looked down upon the young man with a curious, sneering glance. He well knew what would be the result of this mental conflict. Long experience and close observation had taught him that natures weakened by appetite never long withstand those finer impulses which make men shrink from real or fancied dishonour. He knew that such a one as Edward Aveling would not long fight against an alternative which would relieve his present straits, for with such men the snare which ever and more fatally entraps them is present ease and gratification.

Therefore he was not surprised when at length Aveling raised his head and with a bravado steadiness of voice and manner said:

"Name your terms. Give me the money, and let me go!"

"Not quite so fast, Mr. Aveling," returned Levy, his own tone softening as he saw the other encumbering. "The preliminaries to this arrangement will take time. You must not think me over cautious if I claim the fulfilment of my terms before we part."

"What new quibble has come into your brain?" cried the young man, irritably. "I tell you I have already wasted more time here than I ought to have done. Count me out the money, I say, and let me go. I promise to accede to your infernal terms and will fulfil my share in them next week—next month—whenever you please."

"There is no time so good as the present," replied Levy, with calmness. "If you leave this place with the money you demand you must leave it as a married man."

An imprecation burst from Aveling's lips, and he cried:

"How many more of your whims must I gratify? A pretty mess you are making for this girl, for me, and for yourself; for I tell you now, once for all, that I only yield to this marriage from necessity, and from the moment the thing is over she and I separate for ever."

"We will see about that! We will see about that!" muttered the Hebrew. "Stay where you are until I return. You need not fear that I shall be gone long," and taking up the solitary candle, without apology, he quitted the room, leaving Edward Aveling sitting in total darkness.

CHAPTER III.

It is singular how a resolution, whether it be good or bad, once formed, settles and calms the wavering mind. The promised end, if it be good, exalts and exhilarates the individual to effort; and if it be bad, the reward is anticipated in that relief from present distress which, to the weakling or the criminal, is his greatest torture.

After the departure of Levy Edward Aveling sat in the darkened, chilly room with no feeling of discomfort, but rather with one of pleasurable repose. His long and severe mental strain told upon him physically, despite the wine which he had taken to brace himself up, and now, with the prospect of that help which would at least give him a few weeks reprieve,

came a feeling of lassitude which he could not control.

Made reckless by dissipation and its consequent perplexities, with all the finer instincts of his nature blunted, no thought of the mockery to which he had pledged himself entered his mind. What was this marriage to him but an escape from dishonour? If at that moment he had been reminded that it was a God-ordained ceremony, he would have laughed his monitor to scorn. Neither did any humane thought of the girl or the woman who was about to be bound to him to satisfy the avaricious instincts of the money-lender cross his mind.

He shrank from the thought of her as he would have done from contact with an outcast, and in his social egotism he made himself the sacrifice. If in his selfishness he thought of her at all, it was only as a pariah, whose alliance he must conceal and eventually break; for not for an instant did he harbour the intention of acknowledging this creature as his wife.

There were other thoughts which forced themselves upon his mind; thoughts of other times and of other scenes; but these remembrances he banished, and with a strong effort kept memory from trending in that direction; for these thoughts maddened him when coupled with present circumstances, and it was criminal to dwell upon them.

Meanwhile, Levy, in the next room, still holding the candle in his hand, stood in the centre of the apartment, looking upon, and speaking with, another person, whom it is now our duty to describe.

Seated in a low rocking-chair, whose creaking motion back and forth had occasioned the sound so annoying to Levy when in the adjoining room, was a girl, poorly clad, shivering, and so plain in form and feature as to be almost ill-favoured.

She was extremely young, and seemed still younger, for as she looked up into the money-lender's face her countenance was really infantile in outline and expression, while her undeveloped figure indicated the approach rather than the dawn of womanhood.

The room where the girl sat was even more comfortable than the so-styled "office" beyond. Evidently the two rooms constituted the entire suite which the cautious Hebrew allowed himself, for while the larger room contained sufficient to supply the needs of the man, being fitted with such furniture as could be used by night as well as by day, this other chamber was similarly appointed, though to a more limited degree.

The girl, previous to the entrance of her companion, had evidently been sitting in the dark, with her chair drawn near the uncurtained window, and as she sat looking out into the darkness she had sought some solace in singing certain low snatches of song.

Feeble as was the light which the money-lender bore in his hand, it was yet so strong for the eyes long accustomed to the darkness of the chamber that when first brought in the girl shaded its rays with uplifted hand.

Levy did not speak until he had gained the middle of the room; then, placing the light upon a table, he turned and looked sharply at his companion.

"How now, Rachael?" he said. "Why are you not in bed, as I told you? Is this obeying my orders?"

The girl looked up into the stern face before her and replied:

"I could not sleep, uncle, while you were awake in yonder room. Besides, I thought it no harm to sit here and look out into the sky."

The Israelite frowned.

"I shall expect more implicit obedience in what I wish you now to do. Go down and tell the Rabbi Israel that I wish to speak with him—or stay—do you wait here until I go to him myself. Stir not from your chair and make no noise while I am away, or it will be hard with you when I return."

With these words he left the room by a door opposite that by which he had entered, and, after the lapse of some little time, during which

the girl could hear the murmur of voices and the moving of feet in the room below, Levy returned, followed, to the girl's infinite surprise, by the person named Rabbi Israel and two others, whom she recognised as neighbours, their negligent attire showing quite plainly that hasty toilets had been made.

Levy came over to where the girl sat and spoke a few words in her ear. At first she did not seem to comprehend them, but an instant later, with a startled movement, she put up her hand with a supplicating gesture.

The money-lender seized it in his own strong grasp and pressed it with such cruel energy that the girl would have cried out with pain had not her companion at the same time been speaking with her in quick, angry whispers. Evidently his conversation was not unmingled with threats, for ever and anon the young creature would cover still lower in her chair and murmur half audible words of supplication. But at last the stronger will prevailed, and the girl, pale and frightened, arose from her chair.

Then it could be seen that, plain of feature and of form as she seemed, there was still a certain grace of movement about her, and as she raised her dark eyes to her uncle's stern face it could also be seen that the infantile countenance was not without its reclaiming features, for the eyes were lustrous, dark, and expressive, and the mouth, trembling as it was with timid remonstrances which the lips dared not utter, was small and faultlessly formed.

The money-lender took her hand, nodding to the other persons present to precede him into the adjoining room, and after they had opened the door and passed through he re-entered the office with the reluctant bride. The candle in the hand of the rabbi was returned to its place upon Levy's desk.

Edward Aveling, careless of the present, desperate, cynical, and selfish, stood up, but not a look—barely a glance—did he bestow upon the young girl whom his necessities had thrust upon him as his wife. The rabbi, the witnesses, Levy, and the contracting parties were soon suitably placed, and the ceremony, shortened as much as possible at Aveling's rude command, was quickly performed.

Yet, ere the rite was over—indeed, when it was scarce begun—the door behind the bridegroom was softly opened, and into the room there stepped, with noiseless tread, a tall, thin man with pale face and restless eyes.

He placed his finger upon his lip when the money-lender would have accosted him, and by a sign bade the ceremony proceed without interruption.

He stood like a sentinel beside the door until the rite was concluded. With observant eye he took in the whole scene. He knew as if by intuition that this mockery was as distasteful to the bride as it was galling to the groom. He understood that the one was sacrificed to the other's need, and he knew that the trembling bride was wedded only to be repudiated.

But though all this was noted and comprehended, there was no sympathy, no pity, no condemnation pictured upon that pallid face. Instead, there lurked a smile as of satisfied malice, and there glittered in those restless eyes a certain light which might have been taken as a presage of future triumph.

When the last words fell from the rabbi's lips, when the marriage certificate, which the cautious Hebrew had by no means forgotten, was being signed, the stranger stepped carelessly forward, and taking the pen from the hand of the last witness, said softly:

"Let me also sign."

Then, for the first time, was Edward Aveling aware of this intruder's presence. As though the tone of that voice had been a clarion sounded in his ears, rousing him from a deadly, guilty lethargy, he started, tossed from him the hand of his new-made bride, and wheeling about, faced the stranger, exclaiming:

"Mark Upton—you here!"

"Yee, I am here," the other calmly and unperturbably replied in the same softly-modulated

voice. "I came ten minutes ago, in ample time to witness a ceremony of great and peculiar interest," and leaning over the table whereon the certificate lay he affixed his name in an unusually bold, free hand.

Young Aveling looked upon his cousin with varying feelings struggling for pre-eminence. Angry, harassed, entrapped, detected, pressed, and galled on every hand, was it not enough that his own hand should subscribe to his infamy without the presence of this hated cousin? Was he ever to be thus dogged and shadowed? Was he powerless to resist and defeat the malign influence of this fawning, hypocritical kinsman?

The young man clenched his hand and devoutly wished that the blow he had given him a few hours before had been more heavily weighted so that the fellow might never again have risen from the floor on which he had been stretched.

During the brief moments which intervened between the conclusion of the marriage and the signing of the witnesses the bride had escaped from the room, notwithstanding the frowning looks and attempted detention of the money-lender.

Therefore, when Mark Upton raised his head from the paper over which he had been bending, when he turned as if he would have addressed the newly-wedded pair, he only encountered the flashing eyes, the passionate face of his cousin.

"Mark Upton!" cried the young man, "I shall call you to a reckoning for this. Have you not already angered me sufficiently without following me even here?"

"A holier duty than the mere pleasure of attending a cousin's wedding brought me to this place," replied Upton. "But before I name my errand I should congratulate all present upon the happy alliance just formed. I am sorry that the fair bride has withdrawn, as I have something for her ear which I should not care to entrust to others."

Edward Aveling turned contemptuously upon his heel after conquering the strong impulse which seized him to grasp his intruding cousin by the shoulder and eject him from the room. The other saw and understood the temptation, but without heeding it he went on:

"Mr. Levy, I congratulate you upon the success of your plans. You have indeed secured a prize for your fair ward; but you, my cousin," he added, turning to the exasperated Aveling, who stood quivering with poorly-suppressed passion not far from him—"you, my cousin, have reason to reflect upon the rashness and impetuosity of youth; for, had you been willing to abate your impatience, you would have averted many distressing complications. In a word, my friends, it becomes my painful duty to inform you that Mr. John Aveling died two hours ago, and his son—"

With a wild cry Edward Aveling sprang to his cousin's side and seized him frantically by the shoulder.

"What do you say?" he hoarsely cried. "My father dead! Confess that this is but another of your infernal falsehoods and I will forgive you all the other evil you have done! Mark, tell me that you are playing with my credulity, or that it is only for some selfish purpose of your own that you make this terrible announcement!"

Upton drew away from his cousin's frantic grasp, and shaking himself as a dog would do who had been too roughly handled, muttered in reply:

"The road is clear between this and Ashurst. Go and see for yourself if I have spoken the truth or not."

With one quick bound Edward Aveling, forgetful of the mighty necessity which brought him to the money-lender's house, disregarding the obligations which a moment before urged him in another direction, unmindful alike of his disgraceful alliance, his threatened dishonour, his hated cousin, dashed from the room and gained the street. The carriage which had brought him to this obscure locality waited at a

neighbouring corner. He sprang into it, saying to the coachman:

"To Ashurst, and for heaven's sake don't spare your horses!"

The man, from long and impatient waiting, was nothing loth to obey, and with the speed of the wind the carriage with its agonised occupant dashed on.

(To be Continued.)

POSTING PROOFS.

WE have received a little work by Mr. A. Clifford-Eskell explanatory of a simple and inexpensive scheme for the verification of the posting of letters. A very good case is made out, and we emphatically endorse the opinions of those competent to judge in favour of a system that would, we are confident, be alike a boon to the public at large and a source of increased revenue to the Government. The benefits of Posting-proofs to the administration must not be lost sight of. In the first place, there would be a sensible diminution of errors and oversights to be inquired into, and needless investigation would be avoided, or, if demanded, would not extend beyond the office where the missing letter was proved to have been posted; in the next place, numbers of letters never thought of as worth the expense or trouble of registration, or where recipients would object or feel annoyed at having to acknowledge them, would, for the sake of a farthing, be certain to have Posting-proofs stamped for them in accordance with this scheme. And finally, it would help to trace any missing letter of importance in the most business-like way.

The Posting-proofs are stitched into coloured wrappers in numbers of 24, 72, 144, and so on—perforated, like bankers' cheque-books, for easy detachment, and gummed a little way down the back of each, for the purpose of replacement, when officially acknowledged, into the books they are torn from, for record and reference, or of gumming them to any document, as may be desired. A proportionate charge of one half-penny per dozen is added to cover the expense of paper, printing, perforating, gumming, stitching, &c.

The scale of charges is as follows: 1d. for three; 3d. per packet of one dozen; 7d. per book of 2 dozen; 1s. 9d. per book of 5 dozen; 3s. 6d. per book of 12 dozen.

THE Prince of Wales visited Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt's studio, and asked, on behalf of the Princess, when the pictures they had ordered would be ready. The artist replied that she had, as she thought, finished them, but was now a pupil of Stevens, and was sure she could do better, so she would not let them go now. The Prince gave her news of the two kittens which the Princess bought at the Charity Fair, and which she had taken with her to Scotland, Denmark, and Paris. The Prince and Princess, with the Czarewitch and Czarevna, went to see "Hernani" at the Français, and applauded Sarah Bernhardt in the second act. The Prince and the Czarewitch congratulated her and M. Got in the green-room.

M. DEJEAN, proprietor of the circus on the Champs Elysees, Paris, the largest in France, has just died at the age of ninety-four. He started in life as a butcher's apprentice, and his master on retiring left him the business, by which he realised a comfortable fortune. He then started the circus and soon became a rich man. He was remarkable for his Herculean strength, of which stories are told that border on the marvellous, in which fiction mingles very largely with fact. Thus it is stated that soon after starting the circus a tiger escaped from a menagerie he was exhibiting, and made straight for him. Dejean quietly opened his arms, then closed them; when he reopened them the tiger fell dead at his feet, smothered in his embrace.



[IN WORLDLY GARB.]

CHARITY IN A BALL DRESS.

SUCH an excitement had not been in Squareville for many a long day! A new minister had been installed, young, handsome, and withal, unmarried! There was not an unmated heart in the village that did not increase its palpitations even to a flutter. Every pretty head was completely turned by the possibility of the owner thereof becoming some day the Rev. Mrs. St. Clair. Even the old maids and widows of the congregation put on youthful manners and fresh ribbons, and the entire feminine portion of the congregation suddenly became pious.

The prayer meetings were crowded with sanctimonious faces, and heads were bowed in devotion, while the rich tones of the new minister bore his charge up, on the wings of eloquence almost divine, to the throne of grace.

The first Sabbath of his ministerial duties the choir had arranged to sing an anthem at the opening of the service. Of course there had been the usual quantity of growling over it, but finally it was practised to perfection. And as the tall and commanding figure of the minister passed up the church aisle, there broke upon his ears a voice as clear and pure as the murmuring waters of a woodland brook. It was a soprano whose liquid notes thrilled him exquisitely. And when the rest of the choir took

up the refrain, this voice soared like a bird in mid air above all others, distinct in its individuality and superb melody.

Over the bowed head and through the devout heart of St. Clair floated and penetrated the gush of heaven-born song. Involuntarily he raised his eyes up to the triumphant choir for the owner of that sweet voice. One fairer than all the rest, with eyes blue as the heavens and full of liquid light, hair like a web of sunlight sweeping back from a pure, intellectual face, marked by strength of character, yet earnestly tender, rivetted his gaze. All this he saw in one swift and comprehensive glance, and that the beautiful woman was the head of the village choir.

Every word uttered by the young minister was as so many pearls to the gaping, half-fed people. "How logical and original!" said the old heads, with congratulatory voices; while the younger ones exclaimed, "How splendid! What lovely eyes and hair, and such a commanding presence!"

The church awoke from its lethargy, and life and action entered his portals. Such tea-gatherings, socials and mite societies had not made Squareville notable within the memory of its oldest inhabitants. Not a cloud obscured the brightness of the sky of the young divine. Everything within the church and without went merry as marriage-bells. Green pastures and clear waters were all about him, through which he confidently thought to lead the entire populace of the village to heaven.

He was possessed of talents, and eloquence, and a magnetic temperament, which seemed to govern and carry all with whom he associated in the direction he chose. But as a natural result, his egotism grew like a mushroom in so congenial a soil.

Yet presently a tiny cloud appeared in the horizon of Squareville, arousing the antagonism of the new minister. He would preach it down at once—crush it in the bud—and hastened to do so. One prayer meeting night but a few of the younger people were present. He missed the fairest face of the flock, and the sweet voice of the rare songstress of the choir, Bella Harrison. Rumour whispered that the young people had instituted a series of hops, and that she was among the number who attended. It was absolute profanation!

The next Sabbath Bella stood in her place, looking so saintlike and calm, that but for positive proof St. Clair possessed of her actual presence where they tripped the "light fantastic toe," he would not have believed the assertion. How devotional she looked—how almost sadly divine—as she sang, "Oh, had I the wings of a dove." He fancied he detected a look of meek contrition in her face. And now was the time to use caustic and knife. Now the moment to apply the bitter remedies of the stern physician and create a cure.

When he arose fire was in his eyes, burned upon his cheeks, and tipped his tongue. Gracious! how the opposers of dancing and other kindred amusement did gloat over and fatten upon that sermon! As the new minister warmed with his subject he forgot the sanctity of the house, and gave way to temper a thousandfold more sinful than dancing. When he spoke of it as "the hellish device of Satan—a damnable pastime," little did he think how the pure soul of more than one woman shrank from his profanity. It was terrible to Bella Harrison, disgusting, rude and personal.

At a single stroke he lost the confidence and esteem of the great majority of the young people of Squareville, aroused their antagonism, and war was declared. Winter was before them, stupid and dreary enough under the best circumstances, but now they would be more than ever gay, and show Mr. St. Clair that dance they would, and how lightly they regarded his opinion—how much it was behind the time, and unworthy of a liberal age.

All the stiff-jointed old maids whose dancing days were over held up their hands in holy horror at the mere mention of the hops and parties inaugurated after the sermon, and gathered about him, a withered phalanx of piety and propriety. They were backed by the saints and "elect" of both sexes who could rob the poor, oppress the widow and orphan, and, like whited sepulchres, stand up and oppose all lightness and vanity, unmindful of what was within themselves, of the heart black, deceitful and desperately wicked.

Sustained by this class, and spurred on to renewed warfare, by deceit, St. Clair poured forth again and again the fiery thunders of his eloquence and invective upon the young sinners' head, until half of the congregation filled other churches, and youth and maidens openly whispered and smiled their comments in his very face.

Gone was the devotional feeling of the church. The leader had turned it into a theatre of sensational lectures or sermons. The sweet voice of Bella Harrison alone sanctified the place, and gave the hearers a glimpse of the peace of angels and harmony of heaven. Even Mr. St. Clair took into his troubled conscience and heart a little of the leaven of kindness and charity with her tones.

During a visit one day he met the fair songstress at the door of a poor widow. She was just leaving the humble and miserable abode, and upon entering, St. Clair found the penury-stricken weeping tears of gratitude over a bundle of warm flannels Bella had left. And in glowing terms did the poor old creature describe the goodness and generosity of the dear young lady.

"It is the salt of the earth she is, sir. May the blessed saints an' howly angels kape her from all trouble and harm. Shure the roomatiz 'ill not be afther rackin' and scourgin me ould bones wid all this flannin any more. Look till it now, will your reverence? There's a pound of the best tay yees could mate wid in a dhay's travil. Why, she's jest the most charitable angil in the world. And there is mittens for me ould man. And she knitted them wid her own pretty white fingers, heaven bless her."

And giving the old woman some consolation in her poverty and trouble, St. Clair departed with a tender appreciation of Bella Harrison, and more than ever determined to bring her to a realising sense of the enormity of dancing. If she could be convinced (being the acknowledged belle and leader, as well as the most intellectual and influential), others would be certain to follow, and the good work fairly commenced. That very night he would call upon her and earnestly endeavour to convince her of the error of her ways. If the task should prove difficult, it would at least be a sweet one, and he would have done his duty.

A few hours later he was ushered into the cheerfully-lighted parlour of Colonel Harrison, where he found waiting one of the village beaux, in very elaborate attire, even to light kids. Presently a rustling upon the stairs proclaimed the coming of Bella, and St. Clair almost drew his breath with a gasp as she stood bowing and smiling upon them, radiant in a ball dress of turquoise silk, with an overskirt of soft white, fleecy muslin, ruffled and puffed, the snowy neck and rounded arms half concealed and half disclosed by its folds. Her white and slender wrists were banded with rare jewels and gold. In the meshes of her hair, and upon her bosom, nestled rosebuds, and in the heart of each sparkled a tiny diamond, like a drop of dew.

She gave her reverend friend one small white-gloved hand, and expressed her regrets that an engagement deprived her of the pleasure of his visit. Would he be kind enough to excuse her, and call at another time? She went away with the gentleman he had found waiting for her, leaving him to a proxy visit with her parents.

And this, he thought, in the seclusion of his own room, is the charitable young creature old Mrs. McGuire called the blessing of Heaven down upon with the most genuine tears of gratitude. Charity in a ball dress!

The very fitness of things forbade it. Had she not always walked in the garb of a nun, plain-robed, sad-coloured and meek-eyed? What wonder that his dreams that night were filled with visions of the peerless Bella dispensing bounty to the Squareville poor, and that he awoke disgusted with himself for such vagaries of Morpheus?

At a concert a few nights later, fate or St. Clair's evil genius, seated him just behind Miss Harrison and a lady friend. It is proper, you know, for preachers to attend such gatherings, even if the most silly of songs or negro melodies are rendered, or juggling sleight-of-hand, so long as it was not called "theatre" or "dance."

Ah! that a rose by any other name should smell as sweet. It so chanced that every word of an animated conversation during the waiting for the commencement of the music was wafted to the somewhat willing ears of the young minister.

"I dread next Sabbath's sermon, Bella. Won't we catch it again for dancing at Mrs. Dayton's party? But we had a splendid time." "Yes; dancing, if it is such a sin, does a mission work for me," laughed Bella. "It relieves such parties of the insufferable stupidity. I detest sitting still and talking with people who have not a dozen ideas to be picked to pieces by envious gossips, or stared at and followed about by languishing admirers, dinning into one's ears their soft nothings."

"Mr. St. Clair and his church think we ought to enjoy playing 'authors,' music, conversation, and silly, childish plays. I verily believe they would prefer horrible 'kissing' parties to a

dance. Who ever heard a sermon against a 'bussing bee'?"

"There is no accounting for tastes," replied Bella, shrugging her shoulders with infinite disgust. "But I must say that Mr. St. Clair excites my most profound commiseration. If he would only subdue his pride and temper and drop the subject of dancing, for a time at least, the religious and moral tone of the church would improve."

"I presume he is conscientious, and thinks he is doing his highest duty."

"Undoubtedly. But if he would only preach against greed, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness—against backbiting, lying tongues and the follies of youth, he might be benefited."

St. Clair did not remain until the performance was concluded. He stole out with very much the feeling and fate of an ordinary listener. Daily he had been growing into a state of disquietude, and his thoughts dwelt upon the beautiful soprano who would defy his advice and precepts and dance when she chose so to do.

One day both his pen and brain refused the bidding of his will, and he went out to pay his customary visits to the poor. The little dirty, ill-smelling places required all his grace to endure, especially as he was out of sorts with himself and the world.

Nothing but a long, breezy ramble over the frosty hills would extract the bad odours from his nostrils and take the fever and excitement from out his blood. Returning from his long walk at the close of the day just before him upon the brow of the hill that overlooked the village, he saw outlined against the sky the tall, lithe form of the woman whom of all others he was trying to forget.

She turned as he drew near, with the exquisite colour of health tinting her cheeks and sparkling in her eyes. After the first words of greeting, she said:

"I've had a glorious climb, Mr. St. Clair, to get a most glorious view."

And she pointed down the valley, within whose heart was looked a frozen stream; and away off, over undulating hills, evergreen-crowned, and patched with snow, through which brown rocks thrust themselves, the setting sun flamed through the gateways of the clouds, tinting the sky with a summer glory and warmth, flooding the barren and dreary landscape, and streaming down as a benediction from the tops of the highest hills.

"It is indeed glorious, and worth the effort, and I am glad to be permitted to share it with you, Miss Harrison," he replied.

She drew a breath of positive enjoyment as they watched the rapidly changing scene, which, like some beautiful dream, vanished almost as soon as it was born, leaving nothing but a faint golden light upon the western sky to tell of the glory that had been.

"To my mind," said St. Clair, "that changeable sky is typical of pleasures that are as fleeting, and leave behind only gloom and disappointment; even as Dead Sea fruit, beautiful to look upon, but turning to ashes upon the lips."

"And to me," responded Bella, "it speaks of the coming summer and resurrection of nature."

"True. It is indeed the symbol not only of the resurrection of inanimate nature, but of life everlasting. Miss Bella, I am delighted to meet you here surrounded by nothing conventional, but only God and his wonderful works. I wish to speak to you as your pastor and friend about the frivolity and sin of vain amusements—of dancing, and of your influence and accountability, and I hope that I shall be forgiven if I speak plainly."

"Certainly, Mr. St. Clair. But do you not think you have already exhausted the subject in the pulpit? I am sure you cannot complain of my being inattentive there."

She was almost offended, and in the quick coming breath and the increased colour it expressed itself, though her tones were submissive enough. St. Clair bit his lip as he glanced down upon the splendid creature by his side, so vigorous and buoyant of nature, and with the grand inheritance of perfect health.

He noticed the firm set of the red lips over the white, even teeth, and the expression of defiance flashing out of the wonderfully expressive eyes. Then he cleared his throat, opened his mouth, and said something very wide of the mark. And Bella, with the magnanimity of her nature, brought him back at once to the subject in question.

"I know, Mr. St. Clair, I may be wrong, and perhaps to me the simple pleasure of dancing may not be antagonistic to a Christian life. Yet I grant it is vanity, as indeed must be all youthful pleasures. But our natures are childlike and frivolous. We have not as yet taken up the burden and the cross of life. There is time enough to settle down. But since the magnetism of youth draws us together, why complain because we select the most innocent of pastimes?"

"Does it appear innocent to you, Miss Bella? Can you not see that it leads to excitement and dissipation? Are not young men led to drink as a stimulant to their taxed energy, and are not the constitutions of young ladies often seriously injured by the excesses of a heated room? And are not reputations jeopardised by the promiscuous intermingling of society?"

"These social meetings lead to late hours, I grant, and there ought to be many reforms. Dancing should be confined to one's particular set, and if our teachers would only set themselves to regulating these things by advocating more moderation—in short, if they would pluck from it all evil tendencies it would become only what it really is, a healthful practice, and as devoid of immorality and dissipation as skating or any other amusement."

In reply St. Clair spoke at length of its opposing influence to the gospel and serious hindrance to the church.

"That is only because you opposers make it so," she replied. "As I said before, if you would teach us temperance in this, like most forbidden pleasures, it might lose something of its charm."

The shadows of the chill evening had long since swept up the village and darkened and shut out the prospect, and St. Clair turned with a sigh to accompany the obdurate young lady down the rugged path to the village.

"You must forgive me," she said, melting at his silence. "I fear I am quite spoiled. I have always been allowed to think for myself. Yet if you can convince me of my error I shall yield the point as gracefully as possible. At least, Mr. St. Clair, let us be friends. I will try to use my poor influence to modify and purify our dancing parties."

She gave him her hand at her own door with an appealing gesture and look that conquered the already besieged heart of the divine, and the clasp he gave her, and the low-spoken good-night, conveyed more than a pastoral benediction.

"Friends?" were they not more than that now? Had not this fair young lady showed him how weak and sinful was his best endeavour? In place of preaching to her, had she not rather preached to him and gained the day in more senses than one?

In short, had she not won his first and deepest affections? Struggle as he might there was no escape out of the dilemma. He could not marry "a dancer," one of the most gay and influential of her set in the village. And yet he had no hope of convincing her of the error of her ways. Her mind was too logical and firm to easily yield a disputed point. It was, therefore, only left for him to seek forgetfulness in another field.

To remain there now was madness. Bella Harrison had the voice and power to sing him to destruction if she willed so to do. He drew up a request for his dismissal and proposed handing it in at an early day.

When again he met Bella on a mission of charity, the poor fluttering moth proposed a walk to the hill-top from whence they had enjoyed the rare sunset. The conversation drifted to the needy and suffering, and then to themselves.

"When I am gone, Miss Bella," he said, "I

shall often recall this spot and the delightful walks with you."

"Gone, Mr. St. Clair?"

And her face flushed and then grew pale.

"Yes, Miss Bella. You have destroyed my influence here—and my peace of mind, I fear, for ever. It only remains for me to seek new duties and forgetfulness, if I can."

"Your influence? Your peace, Mr. St. Clair?" faltered Bella. "What do you mean? What can I have done?"

"This—just this. You have taught me to love you dearly, and madly, and—and—"

"And I am not fit to hold such a power over your heart? I understand," she replied, in a low and quivering voice.

"No, not that, as Heaven is my judge, my dear girl. You are all that a noble woman could be, lovely and unselfish, charitable; but alas—"

"I will dance!"

The comical side of the wooing presented itself to the quick-witted girl, and she could not but smile through her tears.

"I fear I shall not be understood," he replied, as he grasped her hands, wholly disconcerted. "I had not thought to speak at all, but Providence seems to have ordained the meeting just to humiliate me and show you my weakness. But whatever happens you must know that I love you very dearly. Yet I am not wholly a free agent. I belong to a sacred calling and cause, and to espouse one over so dear or worthy holding views antagonistic to the welfare of the church would very much if not entirely do away with my usefulness."

"Have you so mean an opinion of me, Mr. St. Clair? Do you think that I, as the wife of a minister, would do anything to retard his advancement or usefulness, or that I would fritter away in vain amusements time which should be big with self-improvement and duty? that for the man I loved I would not make any reasonable sacrifice?"

He was distressed beyond measure as Bella uttered her angry protest, and drawing her hand from his, turned away and began ruthlessly to demolish the bright green fringe of a low-bending hemlock.

But it is enough to know that with the eloquence born of love St. Clair so pressed his suit that half an hour later two happy young creatures passed slowly down the hill path amid the gathering gloom, walking as on air and feeling as on moonbeams.

They are married now. The dancing days of Bella are over, but not her influence. To the young people she preaches moderation—to her husband the charity which is kind; and peace, and prosperity reign in the village, as they should and will everywhere if people will be less bigoted and more lenient. H. L.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

THE half-hour prior to the rising of the curtain on Mr. Reade's clever adaptation of "L'Assommoir," is pleasantly occupied by a musical sketch entitled "Locked Out." The piece is, virtually a duologue. The action takes place in the open street, to which an aspect of reality is given by the introduction of a lighted gas lamp. This sketch, entirely dependent on the skill of the opponents, is briskly sustained by Miss Letty Lind and Mr. Howard Paul, the lady singing with much piquancy an Anglo-Dutch song; and Miss Lavis, as the landlady, presented a grotesque appearance when, with a gigantic nightcap on her head, she opened the window and recognised her male lodger. The drama "Drink" remains undiminished in popularity, whilst the representation of the principal characters is marked by as much care and spirit as at the commencement. Mr. Charles

Warner presents a vivid illustration of the vacillating and generous nature of the workman Cotpenn. Miss Fanny Leslie as the blunt yet sympathising Phoebe Sage, Mr. Eignold as the estimable smith Gouget, Miss Ada Murray as the vindictive Virginie, and Mr. Redmond as the disreputable Lantier, render valuable assistance to a performance that is throughout a truly life-like representation.

GRECIAN THEATRE.

AN Irish drama, entitled "The Death Warrant; or, A Race for Life," by Mr. H. Plunkett Grattan, has been produced here, and is well suited to meet the taste of the playgoers who assemble at this house. The play boasts the characteristics of its class, and furnishes plenty of interest and abundance of excitement. It was placed on the stage in good style, and capitally acted all round. Messrs. H. Monkhouse and H. Parker relieved the serious interest of the piece, as respectively Handell Squall, a ragged rascal, whose vocal propensities are irrepressible, and who has a song appropriate to every occasion, and Mark Antony Coriolanus Tape, an impecunious tailor from the neighbourhood of Tooley Street—very much surprised that every Irishman he meets in old Ireland does not know where that delectable district which was immortalised by three members of his craft is situated. Whenever they occupied the stage the house was convulsed with laughter. The afterpiece was "Stage Struck," with Mr. Harry Monkhouse as Tom Tape and Miss M. A. Victor as Sally Scraggs.

"BLUE BEARD" is the subject of the pantomime chosen for Drury-lane. The first bills, with a portrait of that worthy, have just been made to grace the walls, and, together with the fogs, seem to have ushered us into the winter season all at once.

THE Pantomime at the Marylebone, which has been some months in preparation, is founded on the celebrated nursery tale of "Cinderella," and will be by Frank W. Green, with the lyrics written by T. L. Clay.

AFTER a long, honourable, and successful career, Mr. Nugent has retired from the Cambridge Music Hall to enjoy the well-won ease of private life, taking with him the esteem of a large number of friends and of that section of the public for whose enjoyment he has for many years most liberally catered. His successor is Mr. William Riley.

UNDER the superintendence of M. Deschamps, of the French Gallery, in Bond Street, the St. James's Theatre is provided with a choice selection of pictures of the modern school; and if the idea proves always as attractive as at present it appears to be, the painter as well as the actor will share in future in the entertainment of the playgoer.

"THE PIRATE'S HOME" is the title of the new piece at Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Entertainment. It sufficed to entertain the visitors for about an hour and a quarter in a very lively fashion, and the applause was hearty. The music was quite unpretentious, being of exactly the quality one meets with in the French vaudeville; but it answered its purpose extremely well, and more than one of the pieces gained an encore. One of the prettiest songs was that entitled "One golden hour," which Miss Edith Brandon sang with much grace. A song for Mr. Corney Grain called "The Channel Route Pirate" was rendered with spirit by this popular artiste. The acting and singing in the little piece helped it greatly. Mr. Corney Grain was very amusing indeed; and Mr. Alfred Bishop added another entertaining sketch to his portrait gallery of whimsical old men. The most novel study of character was, however, that of Mr. Alfred Reed as the lighthouse-keeper, who so objects to society. Mr. Reed was capitally made up, and his representation of this eccentric personage was one of the best things he has ever done.

FACETIÆ.

ANEMITIES OF STREET CROSSINGS.

PROPRIETOR OF PONT CHAISE (to tall stranger, straddle-legged in centre of road): "Confound you, sir, move out of the way, or you'll get run over."

TALL STRANGER (serenely): "Confound you, sir. It's a free country." —Judy.

CRUSHING.

HE (gramming with an army tutor, and asked over to lawn tennis on a half-holiday): "I saw you in the Row last season several times, but (pathetically) you didn't see me, though."

SHE (cheerfully): "Didn't I?—I'm very sorry. There are so many people there one knows, that it is hard to distinguish one amongst them. By-the-bye, do you walk two and two, or are you allowed to break—"

—Judy.

"HE WAS (NOT) A CAREFUL MAN."

JOLLIHOT: "Well, old boy, I'm sorry to see you looking so down. What's the matter?"

FRIEND: "Ah, I've just lost a cousin of my wife's."

JOLLIHOT: "Dear! dear! Why, it was only the other day I met you when you had lost your mother-in-law's sister. What a careless man you are!" —Judy.

ANY EXCUSE BETTER THAN NONE.

CLERKMAN: "So I hear you've got married again, Jacobs."

JACOBS: "Ees, sur, I thought as how as winter was coming on, and Betty she'd got one blanket, and I'd got t'other, we might as well make 'em a pair, and be more comfortable like." —Fun.

CROSS-QUESTIONS AND CROOKED ANSWERS.

(Picked up at Clitheroe.)

Q. WHY ought the country to be grateful to the Government?

A. Because they have given it Cyprus, the Sepoys, and the secret memorandum for six millions.

Q. Why is this an excellent bargain?

A. Because it has shown the world and the British taxpayer that Europe must be governed by treaties.

Q. What was the "master stipulation" of the Treaty of Berlin?

A. The right to garrison the Balkans.

Q. Has this "master stipulation" been carried into effect?

A. Not precisely.

Q. Does this matter?

A. Not in the least.

Q. Why not?

A. Because the Home Secretary says that the "points" of a treaty are of no consequence.

Q. What is the distinction between a treaty and its points?

A. The Home Secretary does not say.

B. Does the Home Secretary, then, say anything to the point?

A. Yes. He says he meant originally to have held his tongue.

Q. Is that intention intelligible?

A. Quite.

Q. And wise?

A. Eminently.

Q. Why has it not been adhered to?

A. Cross propose, Diz dispose. —Punch.

PIT DISTRICT FIT!

WILLUM: "Heered aboot Peggy Wilson?"

BETTY: "Naw."

WILLUM: "Ben an' fell five hundred feet down the mine and killed herself."

BETTY: "Well, aw've known that gurl sin't ever she wor a child, an' though she be allus careless, aw niver heered on her a-dewing such a thing afore."

WILLUM: "Perhaps thus n'll be a caution tew her." —Fun.

NEW Name for Pugnacious Editors—Libelli-gerents. —Funny Folks.

GIVING HIM A LEAD.

LIVELY LADY: "I'd give my head to live in London!"
(Young Rogers thinks if she'd give her heart it might be managed.) —Punch.

ACID DROPS.

MAMMA: "Well, Rosie, what did you have at your grandfather's?"

ROSIE: "Lots of apples and pears, ma!—and some sweet cider—but it was so sour." —Fun.

RATHER AWKWARD.

YOUNG BATTLETON BRAGG (affably, to middle-aged stranger, whom he finds alone in Browne's studio): "Good picture, ain't it! Old Stilton's bought it—the duke, you know. Browne's going down to Stilton to shoot. Wish I could go with him; but I'm rooked in London till Christmas—just my luck! Capital old boy, Stilton! Looks like an old-clothesman; gets tight after dinner; tells rummy stories! makes you roar! Fine old place—capital shooting! Awful jolly girls, the ladies Camembert—nearly a dozen of 'em, all freckled. Duces tremendous matchmaker—bag you before you can say 'Jack Robinson,' if you don't look out! Awful fun, the old duchess! D'you happen to know her by sight?—shiny red nose, and as under-hung as a bull-bog—Ah, here's Browne at last!"

Enter Browne, suddenly. "Ah, Bragg, how are you? Let me introduce you to the Duke of Stilton!" —Punch.

BRETHREN IN BLACK.

STINGY PARSON: "Your charge seems a high one, sweep. You earn your money very easily?"

SWEEP (with a grin): "Yes, sir, we gentlemen o' the 'cloth' do, sir! Don't we, sir?" —Punch.

THE PROSECUTION A LA DOBBS.

(Scene: A police court. Enter an applicant.)

MAGISTRATE: "Well, what do you want?"

APPLICANT: "A summons, your worship."

MAGISTRATE: "Against whom, and for what?"

APPLICANT: "Against a neighbour of mine, your worship, for perjury."

MAGISTRATE: "Ah! I suppose he has been making allegations against your reputation?"

APPLICANT: "He has, your honour, he has. He actually has the mendacity to assert that I never—well, hardly ever—beat my wife with the firebricks!"

MAGISTRATE: "But—"

APPLICANT: "And more than that, he has not scrupled to falsely swear that I was never convicted of petty larceny from the person, that I never left my children chargeable to the parish, or set fire to my lodgings for the sake of the insurance money."

MAGISTRATE: "It really seems—"

APPLICANT: "I see you hesitate, sir; but I must really beseech you to grant me the summons without delay. I feel these aspersions on my evil name most keenly; and there is no knowing how favourably they may affect my friends and employers towards me."

MAGISTRATE: "Well, well, as you appear in such earnest, take the summons."

(Exit applicant, beaming with satisfaction.) —Punch.

"ANOTHER METHOD."

GUEST: "Something for you? Why? 'Attendance' is charged in the bill!"

WAITER: "Yes, sir; but gentlemen usually consider they owe it to themselves—"

GUEST: "And pay it to you—eh? A bright idea that! But I've a brighter. I will 'consider' that I owe it to you, and—pay it to myself!"

A POSE.

MASTER TOM: "Stand in the corner? What for?"

HIS MAMMA: "Because you are a bad boy."

M. T.: "Can't I be a bad boy here just as well?" —Fun.

STATISTICS.

TOURISTS IN SWITZERLAND.—1,000,000 foreigners crossed the Swiss frontier between January 1 and September 30, 1879, Great Britain contributing one-fifth of the entire sum, Germany one-half, Russia one-twentieth, France and Denmark three-twentieths, America and other countries one-tenth. The expenditure of the 360,000 Teutons averaged no more than 50 francs a head. The expenditure of the other nationalities lumped together averaged over 200 francs a head. Tourists have spent 227,000,000 francs, or £9,080,000 sterling, in Switzerland during the holiday season, £1,500,000 of which were disbursed by the British division.

AT THE GARDEN GATE.

Oh, my false, false love! do you remember,

Now as falls the leaf in the drear November,

And the days are brief and the gloomings late,

Our courting days in the hushed, and weather,

When we lingered so long in the eves together,

And whispered our vows at the garden gate?

Whether chill the blast, or an Indian summer,

Was I ever a tardy or long-watched comer,

As my swift steps rustled the path of fate?

And you, if you waxed for an instant weary,

Did you ever refuse, at my greeting cheery,

The kiss of peace at the garden gate?

Howsoever mournful the wind and the night were,

Your smile and blush in the dusk so bright were,

Your hand so ready to clasp its mate!

Sunset before us, or stars above us,

There was naught in nature but seemed to love us,

Making soft love there at the garden gate.

Now, wailing a dirge over love long buried,

The night-wind comes; and the vows so hurried,

Are but dead, sere leaves in the path of fate.

Your false, fair face, like the moon's in coldness,

Glimmers scornfully on my lonely boldness,

As I linger again at the garden gate.

But never again, in the drear November,

Do I walk abroad but my heart remembers

The love that so brightened the gloomings late,

If my glance, upon either side, discovers

The shadowy forms of what may be lovers

Standing lingeringly at some garden gate.

N. D. U.

OUR Royal Court of Justice is a delightful building. It is stated that an official died from the effect of severe cold and rheumatism, brought on by the damp state of the walls.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MANCHESTER PUDDING.—Flavour half a pint of milk with a little lemon-peel, by infusing it for half an hour; strain it on three ounces grated bread, and boil it for two or three minutes; add four eggs, leaving the whites of two; two ounces butter, three table-spoonsful of brandy, and sugar to taste; stir all these ingredients well together; line a piedish with puff-paste, and at the bottom put a thick layer of jam; pour the above mixture, cold, on the jam, and bake for an hour. Serve cold, with sifted sugar sprinkled over.

MARMALADE PUDDING.—Line the edge and sides of a dish with puff-paste, then beat into a paste enough orange marmalade, with one ounce of butter, to cover the bottom of the dish; add sugar if the marmalade is bitter; make a custard of eggs and milk, and pour it over the marmalade till the dish is full. Bake till set.

BOILED TURKEY.—Draw your turkey, wash it clean, season it with salt, but no pepper. Make a force-meat of some cold veal, finely minced, a little grated ham, pepper and salt to the taste; add also a little grated nutmeg and powdered mace. Fill the crop of the turkey with this force-meat, tie or skewer it well. Dredge flour over it, and wrap it in a napkin. Put it in a large pot, with plenty of water, which has been salted. Let it boil for about two hours, which will cook it sufficiently, unless it be a very large one. Take it out of the napkin, place it on a large dish, garnish the edges of the dish with double parsley, and serve with a rich oyster sauce, in a tureen.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Princes Albert Victor and George, it appears, were terribly seasick during the earlier part of the voyage out. Of course, smoother seas brought them relief.

At a recent Connecticut fair several bottles of native wines were set before the committee for premiums. There was a great diversity of opinion and a warm discussion, followed by intense disgust, when it was found that the man, not understanding his instructions, had filled all the bottles from the same cask.

It would appear that the Queen has resolved to spend more time in London this season than she has done before, if various preparations that are being made in both Buckingham Palace and St. James's signify anything.

Or all the members of the Royal family, Prince Leopold is the one who bids fair to follow most closely in the footsteps of his father, the Prince Consort. He takes a lively interest in the progress of the arts and sciences, and his speeches, which are prepared by himself, are eminently practical and suggestive.

THE sham fight at Portsmouth cost upwards of four thousand pounds. It was practically worth very little, as, in consequence of Dr. Danville's ill-health, no firing was allowed. Portsmouth being a place of very considerable importance to us, the Russian officers were allowed to trot about in the works as much as they pleased.

A TERRIBLE famine has been raging in Cashmere for a year past, and although the British Government has done, or rather has wished to do, all it could to alleviate the sufferings of the people, these good intentions have been frustrated by the corruption of the Rajah's Court and his obstinacy.

WE hear of a lady who keeps her portrait up with the times by sending it every now and then to the artist who painted it for repairs in the drapery. When she gets a new dress that she approves of the same dress is put on the portrait. A new necklace and earrings receive the same distinction. By this means the portrait is always in the top of the style.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N. E.—If your father made no will before he died you will certainly be entitled to share equally with your elder brothers.

ALPHA.—Certainly not, the communication being sent in the usual way. Correspondents are not advertising agents.

A. K.—1. Some feelings of national pride must be uppermost in the breasts of all true Welshmen when they peruse the brilliant manner in which Major-General Sir Frederic Roberts has performed his commission in quelling the insurrection in Afghanistan. No officer in the army more deserves the thanks of the nation for bravery, diligence, strategy, and dash than this soldier, who is of Welsh descent, and we hope his services will receive some practical recognition from the hands of his fellow-countrymen. 2. General Todleben is, we believe, of Russian extraction.

DEBORAH.—It is not usual nor legal to register an illegitimate child in the father's name; but under the circumstances, and as the parties were afterwards married, it would be right to take the father's name.

SARAH.—We have a remedy for suffering such as yours which has never failed when faithfully applied. It does not deal with the hair itself; it is internal treatment. It includes copious stimulation of the brain by books, intelligent conversation and vigorous thought, an abundant good-humour, and a ready, modest benevolence. Its effect is, not indeed to change the colour of the hair, but to blind the eyes at once of the owner and the owner's friends to its peculiarity.

EDWARD.—You could have them printed and published by whom you liked upon your undertaking to meet all expenses.

P. T. G.—"They say" is an accredited old formula in the lips of the credulous, the cunning, the malignant, or the shallow, where a bit of information is given for which no one is supposed to be responsible. The pronoun has no visible antecedents. Sometimes the same is true of the thing said. Commonly it is well to reply to it, "Who says?" Then it becomes apparent, in many cases, that there is nothing substantive about it.

JENNIE.—Men, especially young men, and more especially young men in love, are awkward creatures, and nothing is more common than for a man to be in heart devoted to a young lady, and not able to say a rational word to her when he is glib enough to a host of more acquaintances. It might do him temporary good for you to smile on some "other fellow." Of course, we cannot possibly say that his is a case of this stupidity, but it will do no harm to try him as we have suggested. It may bring him to the right use of his tongue.

SUBAN.—There is little doubt that people have learned to love after marriage who did not love before; but if you wish to know whether it would be prudent for you to try the experiment we say no.

AMELIA.—There is no "best" authority on etiquette. You can buy books in London that describe, more or less accurately, how society manages in the matters of entertainment, dress, hours, cards, &c. If you are doubtful buy that volume your bookseller recommends, and supplement it with your own observation, good feeling, and good taste. Then the volume with your notes will be the best for you.

BELLA.—The methods of signifying assent in such a case are various; to answer that you would be happy to avail yourself of his offer, or would be glad to have his escort, is as proper a response as any.

AMATEUR.—There is no uniform rate of compensation for literary or musical work of the kind you mention. The author or composer of a song which had been popular would usually command higher pay for his compositions than a beginner.

ALFRED D.—A lawyer had better be consulted, but we fear there is no remedy. The offender can easily make an explanation—if you can prove the offence—and set it down as a mistake. We presume, if he threatens to use the information to your injury, you can get "an injunction" to restrain him, that weapon of defence being common and cheap.

MEDICINE CHEST, BOTTROPE, SKYSAIL JACK, and BINOCULAR, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Medicine Chest is twenty, medium height, auburn hair, blue eyes, good-looking. Bottrope is twenty-four, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height. Skysail Jack is nineteen, good-looking, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing. Binocular is fond of children, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be between seventeen and twenty-two, of loving dispositions.

MINX, JUDY FLICK, and TOMMY, three sisters, wish to correspond with three gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Minx is twenty-one. Judy Flick is twenty. Tommy is seventeen. Respondents must be tall, dark, fond of home and music.

POLL, CON, LIZ, and ALICE, four friends, would like to correspond with four young men. Poll is twenty, dark, medium height. Con is nineteen, fair, fond of home. Liz is eighteen, fair, tall, of a loving disposition. Alice is nineteen, cheerful, fond of music. Respondents must be about the same age.

MARY and LOUISA, two friends, would like to correspond with two petty officers in the Royal Navy. Mary is twenty-one, medium height. Louisa is twenty.

N. and H., two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Respondents must be about twenty-one.

ONE MORE LEFT, RUN OUT, FORE LEFT, and MAIN BRACE, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. One More Left is tall, dark hair, dark brown eyes, fond of music. Run Out is tall, dark hair and eyes, handsome, fond of children. Fore Left is fair, light hair, grey eyes. Main Brace is tall, fair, light hair, blue eyes, good-looking, and fond of music.

I. O. G. T., thirty, a mechanic, would like to correspond with a lady between twenty-four and thirty, willing to go to the United States. Must be a teetotaler.

OUR TWO MOANS ARE PARTED.

I FAIR would still call thee, my dear,
Though now those happy days are gone
That were so brief, so full of cheer,
When oft thy sweet smiles I had won;
Our two roads met and long we strode
Love's pathway, that seemed lined with flowers,
And happy in our sweet abode,
A little rosy-covered bower.

Ah, those were days I truly loved!
They had to me no chords of sadness,
And once I thought naught could remove
Their joys, they had so much of gladness;
'Tis now I find all's been a dream,
The joys but shadows on my way,
That brightened awhile life's treacherous stream,
And made all seem so bright and gay.

None could have loved more true than I;
Each day I wearied for the night,
For then I knew that you'd be nigh,
My heart's most pleasing, fond delight.
But false and fickle was time here,
Though oft thy lips swore it was true,
Till I found out the treacherous part
That was each day being played by you.

But chords of love that did us bind
Asunder broke, our roads to part;
Friends but in name, 'tis now we find
We only wish each well at heart.
We said farewell, because our roads
Were parted ne'er to meet again,
Yet in my heart sweet memory still
All those past scenes will still retain. S. B. N.

DAISY and ETHEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Daisy is twenty-two, dark brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home and music. Ethel is eighteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, good-tempered, and fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be in good positions.

HILDA and CECIL, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty and twenty-four with a view to matrimony. Hilda is nineteen, dark, medium height, of a loving disposition. Cecil is eighteen, fond of home, medium height, affectionate.

ELISE G., medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, domesticated, would like to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman between twenty and twenty-five, in a good position.

WILLIAM and JAMES, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. William is twenty-five, tall, fair. James is twenty-four, medium height, dark. Respondents must be about twenty-two.

DESIDERIUS AMANTIS, thirty-three, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady (Roman Catholic preferred), about twenty-six, thoroughly domesticated.

SPLICE THE MAIN BRACE, eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, fair, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition.

NELLIE, ANNIE, and MAUD, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Nellie is twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Annie is eighteen, loving, dark hair and eyes. Maud is twenty-one, fair, fond of home and music.

NELLIE and JENNY, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Nellie is twenty-three, medium height, fair. Jenny is nineteen, tall, fair. Respondents must be good-looking, and reside in London.

St. GEORGE would like to correspond with a lady about twenty-six with a view to matrimony.

A ZULU WARRIOR and TENEDOS JACK, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. A Zulu Warrior is twenty, dark, medium height, fond of music and dancing. Tenedos Jack is twenty-two, tall, good-looking, fond of children.

NIGHTINGALE, thirty, ladylike, fond of music, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty-five with a view to matrimony, living in or near London. A widower with small family not objected to.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FRED is responded to by—Maria, eighteen, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition.

COAL BUNKER by—Marion, twenty-one, fond of home, of a loving disposition.

VIVE LA VIVE by—Mary, dark hair, hazel eyes; and by—Magdalen, tall, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes, and of a loving disposition.

HENRY by—Euphemia, twenty, dark hair, hazel eyes; by—Shy Jane, twenty, light brown hair, blue eyes, fond of children, medium height, loving; and by—N. T. twenty-three, tall, dark, fond of home and children, and good-tempered.

MARY by—Fred G. TORPEDO by—Mildred C., twenty, brown hair and eyes, medium height.

SHEARWATER by—Annie, nineteen, medium height, dark, domesticated; and by—Mab, twenty-one, domesticated, fair.

STARLIGHT by—Protophane, twenty-one, tall, fair, good-looking; and by—Henry D.

PET OF THE MESS by—Gerty, nineteen, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition.

WEATHER LEACH by—Rose, twenty, fond of home, dark.

MISS LOOK by—Frank, seventeen, dark.

NOBODY'S DARLING by—Ensign Staff, twenty-four, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of children.

SHAMUS by—Agnes S., twenty-one, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height.

PERRY by—Ada T., eighteen, fair, fond of children, and grey eyes.

FIVE CLAY SPONGE by—Britta, dark, fond of home.

BUTTON BRASS by—Fanny, fair, loving.

MARY by—E. J., twenty; by—Cyrus Jack, blue eyes, dark, fond of children; by—Kamplulicon, twenty-two, fair, fond of music and dancing; by—Electro Magnet, twenty-two, fair, of a loving disposition; by—Watermill, twenty-one, good-looking; and by—Anchor Jack, twenty, handsome.

EMILY by—D. T. I., twenty-two, tall, good-looking, and fond of children; by—Dardanelle Jack, brown hair, fond of music, good-looking; by—Upper Cylindrical, twenty-three, dark, fond of children; by—Turn Out, twenty-two, dark, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing; by—Little Snigget, twenty, good-looking, fond of music and children; by—James, good-looking, tall; and by—Compass Jerry, twenty-one, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition.

POLLIN by—Jew's Harp, twenty-two, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition; by—Besika Jim, brown hair, fond of children; by—Lower Conical, twenty-one, dark, fond of music; by—Jack Come Lately, twenty; and by—Wheel Rope Tom, twenty, good-looking.

BLOSSOM by—Au, twenty-one, tall, fair, of a loving disposition; by—Piston Rod, twenty-two, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes; by—Jenny, twenty; by—Sweet William, twenty-one, good-looking, light hair, blue eyes, fond of children; and by—Hard Tack, twenty-two, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

ANNIE by—Fe, twenty-four, medium height, fair; by—Crank Head, twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, loving, medium height; by—Flying Jack, eighteen; by—Charley, twenty-two, tall, auburn hair, hazel eyes, fond of music; and by—Not Enough, twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition.

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London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, W.C. A. SMITH & Co.